

**Sandy Campbell Interviewed by Robert Randolph, Barry Goldenberg, and Michael Montero  
Audio Conducted by Jorge Guevara and Observed by Isaiah Armstrong, Chris Brooks, Ibrahim Ali, and Elfry Marte at Youth Historians in Harlem**

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**Robert Randolph**

Alright, so we are here at Teachers College at Columbia University, the date is January 15th. My name is Robert Randolph, I'm here with Michael Montero and Barry Goldenberg, interviewing Mr. Sandy Campbell.

**Sandy Campbell**

And it's the 14th, but that's ok.

**Robert Randolph**

Oh it's the 14th?

**Sandy Campbell**

Yeah.

**Robert Randolph**

I didn't even know that. Oh alright, thank you. So, um, just to start off, tell me when you were born -- where did you grow up?

**Sandy Campbell**

Um, I grew up in Queens, I was born in the Bronx, I lived there for seven years and then moved to Queens.

**Robert Randolph**

What was like your environment like growing up during the '50s and '60s?

**Sandy Campbell**

I was too young then, I don't remember [slight laugh], no, um, I lived in an interesting community that as predominantly Italian and new immigrants from the Caribbean and, um, I went to a high school, Forest Hills high schools, I don't if any of you know of it -- it was one of the top ten high schools at that time. And, um, I was one of eight black students in the school of maybe 2000.

**Robert Randolph**

So, like, what was that like?

**Sandy Campbell**

Um, it was quite an experience -- I mean, it was predominantly Jewish, and I didn't know that I wasn't after a year being there so it was easy to move around and get around, you know, it was a nice experience for me.

**Robert Randolph**

Yeah. So like, what college did you go to?

**Sandy Campbell**

I went to Fordham University and Long Island University, and Harvard.

**Robert Randolph**

And, like what was your like best experience, like during college life?

**Sandy Campbell**

Best experience [pause] -- being away. I think being at both Fordham and LIU, um, if -- if you have an opportunity to go away from school, that's what you should do. Because there is something about being in your community, living at home, and being amongst the friends that you are accustomed to, that just keeps you there, that you just don't really have...um..., you don't push yourself beyond that. But when you are away at school, it's a whole different experience. You are making new friends, it's the whole new world, um, and you are more focused -- I think. You know, I was.

**Robert Randolph**

So, what point in your life did you decide you wanted to become a teacher?

**Sandy Campbell**

[laughs while talking: I didn't.] Well, I didn't really decide that I wanted to teach until, um, well I sort of floundering in, um, it was a decision that my father pushed me into because I had decide because I wanted to go into the seminary and he was not having that. So, he started buying me books and the medical field, and the books in the law field, and said you have to do something other then this lost direction which you are headed. I want you to do something else. So, my father was a contractor, and at the time, Harlem Prep was going through renovations, and he was the contractor for the school, and he introduced to me Ed and Ann Carpenter, and um, I said, "Well dad, I don't know anything about teaching," and he said, "Go for the interview," and I went for the interview and by the time I left that afternoon, I had the job. It was in the Spring, I was interviewed by Ed and Ann, another assistant headmaster Anthony Lewis, and the three nuns that worked at the school -- and I'll tell you about that later -- and I think one or two other people. And, um, that was it.

**Barry Goldenberg**

And when was this? What dates?

**Sandy Campbell**

That was in June of 1969.

**Barry Goldenberg**

When you graduated?

**Sandy Campbell**

No -- No, I hadn't. I hadn't. I hadn't finished anything.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Oh, wow.

**Robert Randolph**

So as soon as you came out of college, you basically went into --

**Sandy Campbell**

-- I had not come out of college. I just made the decision to start teaching. Yep.

**Barry Goldenberg**

And -- and how long until you graduated?

**Sandy Campbell**

When I left Harlem Prep.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Oh wow -- you were in college --

**Sandy Campbell**

Ok. What happened was -- I have very unique experience. I went to the two undergrad schools, and when I left, uh, Harlem Prep, someone said "You should apply to Harvard. " And I said, "Yeah, right."

**Barry Goldenberg**

[slight laugh]

**Sandy Campbell**

And I took what was called the Miller's Analogy at that time, and I placed 52nd in the country. And, Harvard accepted me without an undergraduate degree...and then I finished, did my work there.

**Robert Randolph**

That's amazing.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Wow -- so you started Harlem in spring of '69.

**Sandy Campbell**

And I did Harvard in 1976

**Sandy Campbell**

You know, I think --

**Barry Goldenberg**

So you were at Harlem Prep until the end then, until 1975.

**Barry Goldenberg**

-- Or until it became --

**Sandy Campbell**

I'm trying to remember now. It was the year that I left, was the year that they moved into I.S. 210 [201] -- you know the building over there, I think it's on Park Avenue. You know when the Board of Ed took it over and destroyed it. Hi [Professor Erickson walks into room] -- how are you?

**Barry Goldenberg**

Yeah, no, we -- we started early. [Talking to Professor Erickson] No, we just started, no problem.

**Robert Randolph**

So what I was wondering was, like, about after that happened, like, after they like gutted your whole project that ya'll had worked on.

**Sandy Campbell**

[pause, to think] I didn't feel anything in particular, because I expected it. There is a whole history that I am sure you know about with your reading -- it was doing a fantastic job, and um, I think no one expected that they would do as well as they did. And so all the funding that was there, initially, was withdrawn at some point, because it was too successful. I mean, we were producing students who went off to the London School of Economics. They were just not having it, because they were outdoing anything that the Board of Ed was doing, and particularly for Black and Hispanic students. So, it was just...

**Robert Randolph**

So do you think like the Board of Ed had anything to do with that, like...?

**Sandy Campbell**

So I'm going to take you back to the conference that you had a few months ago, and one of your speakers spoke of , um --

**Robert Randolph**

Wadleigh High School?

**Sandy Campbell**

I'm sorry?

**Robert Randolph**

Wadleigh High School.

**Sandy Campbell**

Yes. They spoke about that and also spoke about their being a number of dynamics going on in the Harlem area, particularly with District 5, and why there has been a history of failure. So, does that answer your questions?

**Robert Randolph**

Basically, yeah...

**Sandy Campbell**

They had, they had, how many years? I think it's 30 years for Wadleigh, right, now?

**Robert Randolph**

Yeah.

**Sandy Campbell**

They had all of this time to make a difference, and the difference has not been made. Whether it's through the, um, the paucity of good teachers, I don't know. There seems to be -- and sorry for Teachers College, which I think is a wonderful place -- but judging from the teachers that I have supervised in the last 20 years, there seems to be a lot of deficiency in teacher training. So, that's one problem. And then you have the problem of the community and the parents really supporting their children -- it's almost like: take care of them but I'm not going to do anything to support their growth, their development in school. Um, then you have the Board of Education that says, maybe says, that they don't really matter anyway -- these are just my opinions about things. But that came out in your conference, because somebody said that the problems that existed 30 years ago are the problems that exist now.

**Robert Randolph**

So do you feel like the environment that Harlem Prep was located in and how the students interacted with the parents, and the teachers interacted with the parents -- do you think that was better now or better then?

**Sandy Campbell**

Um, it -- hmm, I don't know about the parents so much, as the students were very eager, especially after the first and second year of Harlem Prep. They were very eager to be a part of this family, and there was something that was going on in the school with no walls, that everybody felt a part of everything. I know that -- the first year that I was there, I guess I acted like everyone else, I guess I would come in when it was my time to teach, and I did was I had to do. And come 3 o'clock, I left but by the second year, I and many other people, um, if they would finish having their discussions about whatever at 7 o'clock, we would leave. But if we didn't finish, we would take everybody home with us and finish the discussions there -- and

people were eager to do that. People were coming to Harlem Prep, um, living in areas of Brooklyn and Queens, and it was a difficult travel for them. Um, but there was something that was going on that really attracted students, they felt a part of a family that they had not really experienced before, and individuals in the school that were also eager to contribute to their growth, and they had never felt that before, you know. Clifford was a different story.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Yeah.

**Sandy Campbell**

Cliff went to a different school --

**Barry Goldenberg**

Cardinal Hayes --

**Sandy Campbell**

I'm not sure all the specific reasons that he left -- he came to Harlem Prep for one year, but in that one year, um, he really developed a different sense of himself as an individual and what his goals were for education. And he was one of the students -- I think one of two students -- who won a scholarship that year to travel Europe all through the summer. And I think he went to Brown. So...

**Barry Goldenberg**

So, I'm curious -- take me back to -- so you, the story is really different. The story is really interesting: you are in college, and you take this job at Harlem Prep in the spring of '69, how does your first weeks teaching there [go]? You know, how did you develop your teaching philosophy? You know, planning classes?

**Sandy Campbell**

You know, I was afraid. You know, basically, I was afraid. I was facing students who were not that much younger than I -- I started teaching when I was 24.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Ok.

**Sandy Campbell**

And many of my students were 17, 18, some older, 19, 20, um, -- in some ways, I guess because of my family life and the community in which I live, it made me somewhat unfamiliar with the community I was going in to.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Sure.

**Sandy Campbell**

I think I told you this story, that, at some point, I think it was the second or third year, although I made a lot of friends, teachers and students -- I did a well enough job I guess -- I was enough of an odd ball, so that when a rumor had gone out that a CIA agent was planted in the school, a lot of students thought I was the one [slight laugh] but that was cleared up.

**Barry Goldenberg**

[laughs]

**Sandy Campbell**

After -- I think after maybe a couple of months of interacting, um, I felt more comfortable, confident, and welcomed. Or welcomed, and then I felt more comfortable and confident.

**Barry Goldenberg**

How was it like teaching? How did you figure out your teaching philosophy? Did the school have a set curriculum or you had to sort of craft your own?

**Sandy Campbell**

They really, um --

**Barry Goldenberg**

Or I guess, what did you teach?

**Sandy Campbell**

-- they really allowed you to do your own thing. And, um, my homework every night was really to prepare what I would do with them the next day. And I think I took a lesson from my own learning, and that was, um, just investigate everything. So I never really taught, I facilitated. I would present topics for discussions or whatever, and together, we would explore. I mean I would come prepared, obviously, but we would pretty much explore together. And, um, there was never a sense -- I don't think -- there was never a sense of "I'm the teacher so I know," it was more the matter of "there's a lot of know, and we'll learn it together."

**Robert Randolph**

Basically, the teacher and student relationship was on an equal basis.

**Sandy Campbell**

Right.

**Barry Goldenberg**

That's powerful -- and what classes did you teach again?

**Sandy Campbell**

It turned out to be literature throughout the time I was there -- well, the first two years, then I was the Chairman of the English Department.

**Robert Randolph**

So what was your typical day like as a teacher there?

**Sandy Campbell**

[laughs] You know, I may have had three or four classes during the day, and the rest of the time was spent having little small group discussions with students, sitting in on someone else's class and learning, particularly, um, the African American history classes. Um, I think George Simmons was one of the instructors there. Dr. Ben, if any of you have heard of him, Dr. Ben Yakanon.

**Barry Goldenberg**

I've seen his name in a newspaper before.

**Sandy Campbell**

He was just very powerful, and most of the students would just sit around and listen to his lectures, you know. And then within three or four months of being at the school, I was very active with the Baha'i community -- there was a lot of Baha'is at the school -- um, I became a Baha'i, and the students were always asking questions about it. And that was very interesting too, as I wanted to handle it very differently than some of the other teachers. So, my whole thing was again, "well, I'm new to this, so let's explore it together. If you have an interest in it, then I know the people you can talk to take it further." Yeah. So, the typical day basically was, I just lived at the school I think. [laughs] I think if they would have had a bed there, I would have slept there as well, as well as everyone else.

**Robert Randolph**

So, broadly, like how did the surroundings of Harlem in that specific area -- how did the community affect the school?

**Sandy Campbell**

Um, hmm -- I am going to take it in another direction. It's how the school affected the community. And I'll give you a story. Um, I was living in Lenox Terrace, and came home one morning about 2 o'clock, and walked into a grocery store that I had never been in before, to get something for the next day. And I had a, um, a ring on with a diamond on the center. [Looking at Barry] Did I tell you this story?

**Barry Goldenberg**

I don't think so.

**Sandy Campbell**

-- With a diamond in the center. It was a fairly large diamond, in the center. And one guy in the store said, "Wait a minute, wait a minute -- man, why you comin' in here with a ring like that? Don't you know that somebody will knock you in your head?" Before I could answer him, the owner of the store said, "Oh no. No one would ever bother him. He's one of the teachers over



at the Prep." [slight pause] Apparently, the way in which the teachers and the students conducted themselves, their significance in the community had a great impact. Um, at the time of our graduation, we had a number of guest speakers who are well know -- individuals who would come to the school at different times, um, they loved Harlem Prep, you know...

**Barry Goldenberg**

Did the -- did the diversity of the school? Was it, was it similar to the community? You said it was students from all over, and not just Harlem.

**Sandy Campbell**

I -- I wonder at this point, you know, how many of the students really were from Harlem after the second year. I think the school started in '67, um, and I think by 1970-71, many of the students were from Queens and Brooklyn, you know. Bronx.

**Robert Randolph**

All over.

**Sandy Campbell**

Yeah, really all over. And, um, predominantly Black and Hispanic, but there were other groups at the school as well. And we had lots of protection in a sense -- the, um, well, the Black Muslims were very strong at that time, and very connected with the school, the Five Percenters, if any of you know of the Five Percenters, they were really connected with the school. There was a church on 116th street, I can't remember the Minister's name -- he ran the addicts rehabilitation center in the building. And many of us that taught in the school volunteered at times to work there -- so he was really in favor of the school...it was really a lot. Hmm, Abyssinian Baptist Church. It was a place where everybody from different walks came together to take care of their baby Harlem Prep -- that's kind of what it was. Yeah.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Just to kind of -- I heard you say one comment about the, the Black Muslims during that time period. Was there any kind of ideological battles -- you know you had the Black Power Movement, you had the remnants of the Civil Rights Movement -- did any of that come into school?

**Sandy Campbell**

No.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Was it more of an insulated kind of place?

**Sandy Campbell**

Mmhmm [nodding and agreeing with the question].

**Barry Goldenberg**

Interesting. Wow.

**Sandy Campbell**

There was a quote from, um, I don't remember -- I don't remember where it was from, but Ed used to say it all the time. I have done so much, with so little, for so long, so now I can practically anything with nothing at all. And every student in that school could recite that, and there was a kinship with everyone. There was a one family, you know...

**Robert Randolph**

All connected [pause]. So, um, do you think the Supermarket for the school, did it really help bring people together, in a sense?

**Sandy Campbell**

Meaning in that one open space?

**Robert Randolph**

Yeah.

**Sandy Campbell**

[slight pause] Probably -- [sound of phone buzzing on table] that's my phone, that ok. It was a little difficult for me at first, as I'm sure it was for most people teaching, because it wasn't so much that the noise factor distracted you from teaching, as it was what they were saying. 'Cause it was like, "I'm teaching you, but, Mister so and so or Miss so and so over here is saying something that sounds so interesting, I have to remember to ask about what that was when I was done here." Or the students would. Sometimes the discussions would get so lively, that individual teachers would stop what they are doing, and there were these portable walls, and we would pull them apart, so it would just be one big group, and that one teacher would teach...

**Barry Goldenberg**

Can you describe what the classroom looked like?

**Sandy Campbell**

Ok, so you can imagine just a huge, open space. The only thing that separated people or classes were these, um, hmm, I don't know what they called them -- they were dividers, maybe they were as high as this [pointing to cabinet shelving] and it's just uh -- not particle board, but like this wide, panels on legs, and they could change it around any time they wanted. So, if you walked into Harlem Prep, maybe 20-25 cubicles like that throughout the place that may not be the same the next day that you come. So, you know, you just had to put it together once you got there [slight laugh].

**Barry Goldenberg**

Did that influence your teaching style, knowing that you had to -- how so?

**Sandy Campbell**

It was just, it was just -- that's the way it was. Everything was just "that's the way it is" and deal with it. The main thing is, you're working together to get something done. You know, so...

**Robert Randolph**

So, what was the energy like of the students everyday?

**Sandy Campbell**

Um, I think, you know, most students, had good energy, they -- a lot of students had some crazy home backgrounds, so Harlem Prep became like their home away from home. And it worked two ways: some of them would come and bring with them whatever pain they were experiencing at home, they would bring it into the space, and um, Ed or Ann or one of the other administrators, if it was serious enough, would try to deal with it and pull them out. Um [slight pause], but I think there was a kind of love -- well not think, I know -- a kind of love that was going on, so that if I was a student and I came into my class of 15, and I was having a particular issue -- wow, someone just jumped into my head, a young women -- I knew that my family there would help me get over whatever it was that day, and if not, would stay at school to work for things. There were a lot of young people there who were dealing with very, very serious issues. We had one student who excelled, and at the end of the year, received all sorts of awards, and on the day of graduation, I found out that throughout the entire year, he had lived in an abandoned building, and would have to go to the roof of the building that he lived in to cross over to the next roof to come out and go to school. And that's how he lived. And friends would let him come over and shower, and help him with meals, but that's how he lived. But he was really determined to do well -- and he did.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Can you tell me more about, like, the student population? You know, I mean you had students like that -- I know you said it's diverse in terms of location of where they are coming from, but, I mean, I know from the documentary it talks about dropouts, and war vets, was that true?

**Sandy Campbell**

I think, I think of who first started, it was designed to assist, um, students who had put been put out of their schools for whatever reasons, behavior or academics, whatever. And um, also those students who were disillusioned and decided to drop out, and you know, didn't know what to do next. But, by maybe the third or fourth year, there were students that dropping out of their high school if they knew that they could get into Harlem Prep.

**Barry Goldenberg**

That's interesting. So, it really the population maybe changed a little bit over the years --

**Sandy Campbell**

-- Yeah --

**Barry Goldenberg** -- from the initial group too --

**Sandy Campbell**

And I don't know of what the number might have been through those years of kids that came that found it wasn't a good fit for them, and decided to leave because as far as I can remember, everybody was just there. There were people who would absent themselves from different activities at the school for a period of time but then they would show up again, you know. I think the graduation rate was pretty good, and those going on to college was somewhere in the mid-80s to 90 percent of the student -- the graduation.

**Barry Goldenberg**

I know --

**Sandy Campbell**

Do --

**Barry Goldenberg**

Go ahead.

**Sandy Campbell**

Do you have figures, on that?

**Barry Goldenberg**

So, so I know from the some of the documents that I've read that students weren't allowed to graduate until they got accepted to college --

**Sandy Campbell**

-- Yeah --

**Barry Goldenberg**

Um, which on some levels, would make it be 100% -- if, if, --

**Sandy Campbell**

Yeah.

**Barry Goldenberg**

-- You know, obviously, I don't have the numbers of how many students once they got to college --

**Sandy Campbell**

So, what I would question then is, um, many of the students were accepted into schools for which they did not receive scholarship --

**Barry Goldenberg**

-- Sure --

**Sandy Campbell**

-- So that might have changed it once they were accepted, you know it was alright for them to graduate but whether they went on or not I'm not quite sure.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Did you ever work with any alumni students who came back for assistance, or come back for resources?

**Sandy Campbell**

One.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Ok.

**Sandy Campbell**

Um -- one student, a female student who graduated from Cornell, who came back as an assistant teacher or teacher or something for a while, we worked together.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Yeah.

**Sandy Campbell**

In fact, Cliff probably spoke of her, I just can't call her name of this moment but he was very close to her.

**Barry Goldenberg**

I do remember -- yes -- I do remember talking with him about a teacher he was fond of.

**Sandy Campbell**

There is a book, um, sadly I have not read it, um, Project Girl.

**Barry Goldenberg**

I'll have to write that down.

**Sandy Campbell**

It was written by Janet McDonnell -- and, um, of course she was a student at the Prep. I'm not sure to which college she went, but she is currently or recently, um, a corporate lawyer in France, but she wrote this book Project Girl. Um, trying to think of [pause, thinking] Rosie Price... is another student that went to the London School of Economics, and I know that she has done some writing. She, she now lives in -- or the last I heard -- she was living in Gibraltar. She met her husband, in, in England and moved on to Gibraltar. What I'll do is because I am

doing some work with Hussein, as I collect some information, I'll pass it on to you, so you can do some following up. [Speaking to the other interviewers] I also told Barry that there is a student that runs a program on 125th street -- and I really don't remember the name of the program -- but she has a big, beautiful office, and she said that anytime that you guys want to interview her or interview someone else, or just have a meeting, she is open to that.

**Barry Goldenberg**

We'd love that. Definitely sometime in the near future.

**Robert Randolph**

Taking it back to the like the school aspect, from a teacher's perspective, what did you think made Harlem Prep so effective?

**Sandy Campbell**

The sense of community, that they felt they were part of a community, and I don't think students felt as if students had to be on stage for any reason, and if whatever they wished to share in their learning process was always welcomed -- no I'm good thank you [in response to one student asking if Mr. Campbell wanted a glass of water] -- um, and that, you know, no one was pushing them. Oh! Alright [slight pause], there was an air of competition but it wasn't competing with anybody else, but it was competing with yourself. Whatever is that I needed to learn tomorrow because I knew what I, you know, had today -- that would be my quest. What do I need to learn tomorrow? What do I need to do -- where do I go from here? And I think that -- I don't know, I think that is something that hit everyone. So a lot of the students felt that if students were going to do any stretching, they were free to do it there, and they could share whatever they were doing is appreciated, they were appreciated.

**Robert Randolph**

It was safe space for them, that they weren't used to.

**Sandy Campbell**

Exactly - a safe space. Yep.

**Michael Montero**

Um, for some students, Harlem Prep became home away from home, right, did you guys have any like afterschool programs or extracurricular activities to like stay there for more time?

**Sandy Campbell**

[Jokingly shaking his head, then nodding] Yeah we did -- we didn't have any, um, we didn't have any after school programs that I remember were planned...they just happened. There were lectures after the day was over that, um, it was usually born out of a number of students saying to a teacher, um "Could we meet this afternoon and further discuss this point?" You know, and so, if there were 20 students in the class and you know, um, eight of them were particularly interested in something that was brought up that day, you could stay, yeah. And I mean, I don't think there were any teachers that rushed out of there unless there was something really

important, but most of us stayed forever and ever. It, it became -- it became almost a weekly thing that some of the teachers and students, on Friday, we would sit down and plan out the activities and meals that we would have over Saturday and Sunday and everybody would just leave school and go to that person's house, and just stay there for the weekend. Yeah, I don't, I don't [slight pause] -- and I'm not exaggerating, it was like every week.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Did you have any specific memories from any of those events? Some of those planned weekends, or working with students, or...?

**Sandy Campbell**

Um [thinking]

**Barry Goldenberg**

Or what did you guys talk about? Was it school stuff, or was it--?

**Sandy Campbell**

Usually it was one of the things that happened in the lectures that day, or books that people were reading. We didn't have to form book clubs because they just formed themselves. Um, no, I don't remember anything in particular, I just -- it was really nice. My nephew is really involved, at this point, in spoken word poetry, and of course at that time, we had a number of students who were engaged in that, and you know, so that was a time that they shared with each other. Some of them were musicians, and um, we would talk about music. I mean, we were coming from -- hmm? [comment from observing student about him playing the guitar] Ok. Um, often they would look at me and say "You just don't know anything," and I would say "ok." It was just the music at the time.

**Barry Goldenberg**

On the same topic --

**Sandy Campbell**

Oh yes I do remember!

**Barry Goldenberg**

Oh great!

**Sandy Campbell**

Um, one of my students with whom I still have contact, um, was really into Santana --

**Barry Goldenberg**

Ok --

**Sandy Campbell**

And that would listen to a lot of Santana at that time. And we had this party -- he left Harlem

Prep but went out to, um, South Hampton University, and a group of us one night went out to spend the afternoon, dinner, and I don't know why this comes up, but we were in this pool house and it was late, it was in the winter, and there steam coming up from the pool, there must of been about 30 of us there, and there were carousal horses going all around the pool. I don't know why that came to mind, but I remember us listening to the music and me not understanding it and they making jokes, but it was -- there were just so many memories and I still have contact with a number of the students and a number of the students have passed on. Unfortunately, so have a number of the teachers, um, but we had a reunion, um, -- I think I told you about that --

**Barry Goldenberg**

Sure, a couple years ago.

**Sandy Campbell**

-- A few years ago. And um, since then, two of the teachers associated have passed, so, but you ask -- when you start to -- I guess all of you will be interviewing some of the former students, right? So when, you'll see how excited they get when talking about it. It was a great place.

**Barry Goldenberg**

We're excited about it.

**Robert Randolph**

So, um, like do you think the freedom aspect of like how much freedom that they had affected the academics of the school?

**Sandy Campbell**

[pause] Yes. I think when you, when you are trying to grow, and grow at your own pace, and you have a sense of that pace, um, when someone tries to impose certain restrictions on you, your eagerness to do well is dulled. And I don't think that happened at Harlem Prep. I mean I'm sure it happened with some, but you know...

**Robert Randolph**

-- Not most. [pause] So I was curious to know some of the school policies that ya'll had at the school.

**Sandy Campbell**

Hmm...[pausing]

**Barry Goldenberg**

I mean, I guess any school policies that stuck out that were unique or different then other schools -- even your own high school experience -- that made Harlem Prep successful or, that you agreed with or disagreed with?



**Sandy Campbell**

Nothing sticks out of my head. I mean I'm sure there were, but I just can't bring them to the front right now.

**Robert Randolph**

Yeah.

**Barry Goldenberg**

[pause] I have a question about speaking -- you were talking about, you know, that I think that's what I've kind of read about too -- this, this collegial student-teacher relationships, and staying after class for extracurricular activities, was that kind of an expectation brought from the administration or did that happen kind of naturally, or, um...?

**Sandy Campbell**

It just happened.

**Barry Goldenberg**

It just happened.

**Sandy Campbell**

Um [pausing to think] --

**Barry Goldenberg**

-- I guess was it an expectation?

**Sandy Campbell**

You know there were a number of teachers that were my age, maybe a few years younger, older, and Harlem Prep become an arena -- maybe that's a poor choice of words -- but an environment in which you were able to grow, and there were a number of people who came there who had not done a lot of growing or discovering themselves, and it certainly fostered that. So, I think that strength in the relationship that you had with people, you know.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Can you describe some of -- or remember any students that you saw grow? Not just academically, but kind of personally, emotionally, during their time at Harlem Prep that you worked with? What does this kind of growth look like in students, from your perspective as a teacher?

**Sandy Campbell**

Yeah, yeah, um, there were a number of students that were there -- as I had mentioned, you know, they had dropped out of their own school because they were very disillusioned by whatever was going on in their former high schools -- and I'm not really quite sure that any of them really knew when they come to Harlem Prep what it was they wanted, they just knew what they didn't want. So, being there at the Prep, and building the relationships that they did

with the teachers and the administration enabled them to begin to focus in a different way. So if they were there for a year, or if they were there for two years, um, they were able to move on and choose colleges -- I mean they could make a choice of a college that would really fit their need, um, there were a number of students that -- and one just called me today -- that was battling with an issue, he lost his dad, um, in some kind of mix-up where his father was shot by a policeman, and he was really trying to work that out, and he was bitter a lot. And he was one who did a lot of the poetry, and he was also an artist, and I think towards the end of that year, he was producing artwork that was just absolutely incredible, um, and that was a growth for him. I remember at one point he was having a lot of problems being at home because he had a brother that was, they didn't call it bi-polar then, but that's what the call it now. When the brother kind of went off, he and his mom would have to lock themselves in their room and it was just very difficult for him to study and get things done and he would argue a lot with him mom and argue a lot with his brother, and then towards the end -- well, he came, he came to live at my house for about a month, and his mom, said that "I don't know the effect you had on my son, but you sent my son home to me." And from that day, I don't know if I had anything to do with it, but from that day, he and his mom had a much better relationship, his brother had a better relationship, he was producing all this artwork, and he, he's a fantastic artist. At some point -- and this is a side story -- at some point in his life --

### Barry Goldenberg

These are great stories.

### Sandy Campbell

-- He stopped producing art and did a lot of, um, I'll think of it in a minute. He did a lot of work but then had some rough time again when his mom passed, and he just stopped working. Now this is maybe 30, 35 years ago, I guess. Just this weekend, um, he called and said his wife -- he and his wife were going to come to visit, and then he said, you know, "I'm ready." And I said, "Ready for what?" And he said, "Ready to start my work again." You know, so, we've been talking a lot about Harlem Prep. He's had some opportunity to interact with a number of students the past year or so, um, his wife is very encouraging and so something, I guess, from the Harlem Prep days, is now stimulating him to continue for whatever point he left off.

### Robert Randolph

Do you think that teachers like yourself, or Harlem Prep in general, had any idea that they would have that sort of effect on kids of that caliber?

### Sandy Campbell

Hmm [thinking], no. Nor did I realize on that June interview and being accepted or being offered the job, that here, 43, 44 years later, that I would look back at Harlem Prep as one of the best periods of my life. You know, it helped me grow up.

### Robert Randolph

So, basically, not just the kids grow up, but you grow up together.

**Sandy Campbell**

Oh yeah. [pause] You know it would be wonderful, and I'll talk to Hussein about it, if maybe you and one of the students would visit Dr. Ben.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Sure -- absolutely.

**Sandy Campbell**

He was there when Harlem Prep began. I think he's in a nursing home now, um, and he's about 90 something.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Wow.

**Sandy Campbell**

So... [pause]

**Barry Goldenberg**

Yeah, you know, thinking about, you know, what you said about -- I mean -- there, the impact they had on teachers, on students, on the community. As of -- I guess myself, in thinking about, what's the one -- if you had to think about one key aspect tick -- was it the teachers, was it the students, was it the administration, was it the community, was it the structures, was it the whole kind of, thing kind of happened?

**Sandy Campbell**

It was the whole -- yeah. It was the whole...And I don't mean to paint a picture that everything everyday was wonderful and beautiful, it wasn't, I mean there were days that we were very angry with, you know, individuals with each other, teachers with students, students with teachers, administration --

**Barry Goldenberg**

-- Sure --

**Sandy Campbell**

-- With the world beyond Harlem Prep. You know, when they were writing some pretty nasty things in the paper about the school --

**Barry Goldenberg**

-- Sure, absolutely --

**Sandy Campbell**

-- It was almost like a very strategic attack, to let's, "this school is doing far better than anticipated, let's try to kill it now."

**Barry Goldenberg**

Can you tell us -- was there a time when things didn't work out? Even in person, when you were teaching--?

**Sandy Campbell**

Really, really towards the end -- or you mean with anything --

**Barry Goldenberg**

Yeah, with anything --

**Sandy Campbell**

Well towards the end, there were a lot of stories about misappropriation of funds. Um...

**Barry Goldenberg**

Do you know what years these were? Was it after '75?

**Sandy Campbell**

Yeah I think it was shortly after '75 because I think that's when all the funds just dried up.

**Robert Randolph**

Yeah.

**Sandy Campbell**

But, a lot of the funding sources, when they, when they allocate big corporations, Ford Foundation, Exxon, when they allocate funds, it's usually for a specific period of time -- we'll do this for 3 years, we'll do this for 5 years -- it was like everything ended around the same time, you know. However, um, in another month or so, um, when Hussein interviews are completed, then I'll have him share some, because he's been able to get in touch with some of the old heads of those organizations, that have stories, too. So.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Yeah -- that would, I would love to hear those. That would be helpful for us, kind of help piece it all together the pieces in the puzzle...

**Michael Montero**

When like --

**Sandy Campbell**

-- Michael --

**Michael Montero**

-- the school was doing so great, why do you think they weren't being funded, if they were doing what they needed to do as a school?

**Sandy Campbell**

Why do you think?

**Michael Montero**

I don't know.

**Sandy Campbell**

Really? Think about it.

**Michael Montero**

[pause]

**Sandy Campbell**

Who's being educated? This is -- who's being educated? The kids in Harlem are being educated, and most of those students -- at that time, it might still be the same -- are not expected to do well. And when they do well, and really excel more than so many of the other students throughout the city, they can't have this. So Ford Foundation pulled away, Exxon, Carnegie Mellon, or Carnegie --

**Barry Goldenberg**

Sure --

**Sandy Campbell**

I don't know whether it was all of them coming together making this decision because now you have, they are outdoing the promises of the Board of Ed, who have labeled these same kids, um, like they cannot be educated or they are not going to do well, but they are doing well, they are getting into the best colleges. I mean I may be totally wrong, but again, I'll go, take you back to the conference that you had here, and that was something that was sort of intimidated, you know, it was almost like a strategy.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Like it almost reached a peak that they were doing "too well," they don't need our help anymore...

**Michael Montero**

Was there a way of fighting that?

**Sandy Campbell**

Hmm...I mean, I don't think so. You could speak out against it, you know? I mean, and I'm getting into a whole realm here, but there is no more power in fighting that, I think, then to convince Lynch that De Blasio's statement about having a Black son and what he's up against, is his right to do so, and Lynch is trying to make it something entirely different. What is real is real, you follow me?

Michael Montero

Yeah [nodding].

Sandy Campbell

Ok.

Robert Randolph

So do you think that if all these companies knew what the school was actually capable of and what it achieved, like, later on in the years, do you think that they would have given you more money to do it?

Sandy Campbell

They knew what was going on, there were reports that had to be submitted. Whenever you get funding like that, you have to report, and in some cases, um, in order to get additional funds, you have to write a proposal. And all of that was done, and all the facts were brought up, but things just started going downhill. The school was started by the Urban League and Marymount College, and I think Marymount is where the connection with the nuns --

Sandy Campbell

-- And two of those nuns are still alive, and you might even be able to have a conversation with them. What's happening? [turning to one student operating the audio equipment, who is saying that he is having trouble hearing Barry and Michael]

Barry Goldenberg

-- Sure, makes sense, with the Jesuits --

Robert Randolph

You can't hear like them, or? [to student operating audio equipment]

Barry Goldenberg

We'll make sure to speak up [additional comments made about the audio levels]. I know it's getting close, time goes fast, a few last questions --

Michael Montero

I have one -- I was told that there were some days that teachers were not being paid, was that true?

Sandy Campbell

That happened quite a few times.

Michael Montero

Did that happen to you?

**Sandy Campbell**

Yeah, when the funds did not come through in time, so that the teachers could be paid. That, that's all it was. I mean, let's say Ford Foundation's would put up ten thousand dollars, and they were late coming through --

**Michael Montero**

-- But you always got your money.

**Sandy Campbell**

Yeah, yeah, eventually, we would get it. I mean, I guess, maybe there were times that we didn't, I don't know, I don't remember, not that I didn't need money like everybody else but...

**Robert Randolph**

I think the reason that he asked that is because the media sort of disillusioned it as you weren't getting paid at all, like you were getting paid, like you were supposed to be and like you weren't getting, like, you weren't getting the money you deserved and that you were still going on teaching even though you didn't get the money.

**Sandy Campbell**

Could be, I don't know. I don't really remember. I think -- this sounds a little weird -- but Harlem Prep was such a sustenance for our existence that I don't know how many people were affected by that, by that degree. I mean you didn't have food at home, there was food at Harlem Prep.

**Robert Randolph**

So it didn't really matter?

**Sandy Campbell**

I'm speaking for myself.

**Robert Randolph**

Yeah.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Did any of these -- I mean as -- was this a discussion amongst faculty in terms of instability, and newspaper articles are coming out -- and was that an issue?

**Sandy Campbell**

I mean people complained about, you know, about --

**Barry Goldenberg**

-- Everything --

**Sandy Campbell**

-- Everybody wants their money, I know, so people complained about it, but I think maybe it

had to go month without pay, but you eventually got it. I don't remember not getting it, but that was so long ago. Maybe. You know, you asked about a significant memory, and this is kind of a sad story, but, um, there was a student in the school that was a tremendous drummer, and, um, [slight pause] there was some incident that occurred outside the school -- he committed suicide -- I remember coming together the week after, I mean, it just put, it was a terrible, terrible feeling, it was like losing a member of your family --

**Barry Goldenberg**

-- Sure --

**Sandy Campbell**

And I left New York, um, I think the year the school closed, and I didn't come back for many years, and there was a restaurant that I used to go to that I started going to down on 34th Street -- this is a crazy story -- and I started going to it, and I couldn't figure out why I was so drawn to this restaurant, it wasn't the food that was so great, it was just a nice little place and they have a nice courtyard outside, and then one day I took one of the former students and he was very quiet through the meal and when he finished eating, he took me aside and said, "Sandy, do you know that, this, that's courtyard is where he fell?" And I said, "I had no idea." I don't know why I tell that story, but it's just...

**Barry Goldenberg**

It stuck with--

**Sandy Campbell**

It stuck with me.

**Robert Randolph**

Yeah.

**Sandy Campbell**

You know, so, we've had a lot of tragedies. The year that I came to the school was the year that the Urban League had sponsored a trip to Africa, and, um, I can't remember his first name, his last name was Gomez, um, he went with the Urban League and quite a few people with the school, and drowned -- I think I told you that story --

**Barry Goldenberg**

Yeah, briefly, but I don't really remember, yeah.

**Sandy Campbell**

It's funny -- Victor, Victor Gomez -- just recently I got an e-mail from a person who is putting together some stuff, and asked do I remember anything, but he was the year before I came.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Yeah.



**Sandy Campbell**

Um, there were a lot of students who had drug problems.

**Barry Goldenberg**

During their time, or prior?

**Sandy Campbell**

Prior. And managed through the assistance of Ed Carpenter and his wife, and all the teachers who were aware, there were able to work through them, so that certainly after being at the school for a number of months and before leaving the school, they were clean. And that's where the Addicts Rehabilitation Center came -- I can't remember the pastor that group, but he, he passed a few years ago.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Were there any other outside organizations that worked with Harlem Prep in terms of, you know, community, you know, institutions or, that partnered for resources or activities?

**Sandy Campbell**

Well, the Schomburg was there, assisting, um, a relationship, um, Harlem Hospital, and um, I guess quite a few. That's a good thing, I should look into that to see.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Because most -- a lot of the materials don't talk, or you know documentary doesn't really show, who other was involved, but obviously, it was this kind of community place right, and so lot of institutions were involved --

**Sandy Campbell**

-- Have you seen some of the pictures that have been posted lately on the website?

**Barry Goldenberg**

I have not, I'll have to view those.

**Sandy Campbell**

Pictures of Sammy Davis Jr., Louis Farrakhan, I mean all -- so many individuals, Ruby Dee, um, I can't remember all of them, some of them have like popped up I don't even remember seeing them there, um, but they were very supportive of the school.

**Barry Goldenberg**

One or two last questions and we'll let you go.

**Robert Randolph**

So, recently have you noticed any schools that have been upholding the values that Harlem Prep has upheld?

**Sandy Campbell**

Hmm...I don't know, I haven't really looked. I do know that Harlem Prep was the forerunner of the charter school, and you know, they are going crazy with charter schools all over the place [slight laugh], and it might possibly be a very good idea, but, I don't remember anything being in place at Harlem Prep that put people out, and they tried to accept as many as the students that applied as possible. I don't even know what the policy was there, for acceptance but it seemed like --

**Barry Goldenberg**

-- At Harlem Prep?

**Sandy Campbell**

Yeah. So...

**Robert Randolph**

And my last question is, do you think a school like Harlem Prep, would -- I'm trying to figure out -- Harlem Prep, do you think a school like Harlem Prep would have the same affect that it had in the time that it was strived?

**Sandy Campbell**

[pauses to think] Yes. Now the reason I'm saying yes, earlier, this past year, I think it was back in July, about 20 former students came together, and talked about their experience at Harlem Prep and what it did for the community, and one of the last questions was that one. And, all of the students said that if there was a Harlem Prep today, they would give up their jobs if they could and come to work there and teach. So, I think it would be a great thing. Yep.

**Barry Goldenberg**

That's powerful. [comment about one student doing the audio on whether he was paying attention] I had one last question, kind of takes us back a little bit, thinking about -- this reflective process of you being at Harlem Prep -- how did the school change, either in terms of your teaching or in terms of the school in general -- from when you started, to when you left, since you were there for a long period there, and what made you leave ultimately?

**Sandy Campbell**

Um, I left mainly because the Board of Ed didn't want to continue my service without a degree, and I'm glad that happened, because then it pushed me to apply to Harvard.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Yeah.

**Sandy Campbell**

Um, it became -- what I observed at Harlem Prep, then became, um, my life goal.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Yeah.

**Sandy Campbell**

And that was literacy. And because I had been dealing with so many students that were so exceptionally bright, and had come to the 10th, 11th, or 12th grade in their high schools, but their reading performance was at such a low level, I kept questioning, "Why was this happening? And how could they get this far? And what's going on?" So when I left Harlem Prep, I was determined to really look into that, and I became a literacy specialist for the Board of Ed.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Any final thoughts, reflections? Anything you want to tell us that we forgot to ask or anything that comes to mind, not that it won't be the last time we talk, but --

**Sandy Campbell**

No, it won't be, at all. Um, I guess, just what everyone learned at Harlem Prep: don't be as concerned about competing with everyone else, know what you know, know what you don't know, and push yourself to get to whatever next steps you need to, to be successful.

**Barry Goldenberg**

I guess on that note, we'll, we'll officially wrap the interview. Thank you for taking the time --

**Sandy Campbell**

-- You're welcome.

**Barry Goldenberg**

-- to share your experiences about Harlem Prep, about your time there, and we really appreciate it a lot.

**Robert Randolph**

Thank you.

**Sandy Campbell**

My pleasure.

**Barry Goldenberg**

Thank you, thank you.

**Michael Montero**

Thank you.