

Dr. Smith: Hello?

Interviewer: Hello, Dr. Smith?

Dr. Smith: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes, hello. This is Dimitra from Vanderbilt.

Dr. Smith: Yes.

Interviewer: Hello. Yes, hi.

Dr. Smith: How are you doing?

Interviewer: I'm doing well, and you?

Dr. Smith: I'm good. I'm good.

Interviewer: Good, good. Is this still a good time to chat with you?

Dr. Smith: This is fine.

Interviewer: Okay, good. This will be, once again, a discussion about the Wisdom of the Elders workshop, and we'll use the information that you provide to us to help us in writing up the program manual to give to other communities who want to start or maintain a similar program. Thank you again for your willingness to do this phone interview.

I will be recording the session, but it's only going to just be shared with the writers of the manual. It will not be any sort of public information.

Dr. Smith: Okay.

Interviewer: Okay, do you have any questions before we start?

Dr. Smith: No.

Interviewer: Okay, then we can just jump right in then.

Dr. Smith: Jump right in.

Interviewer: All right. Okay, so I'll start off with a few questions about the preparation. Program planning and preparation for the program. The first question is how did you come to collaborate with Dr. Nwankwo on Wisdom of the Elders?

Dr. Smith: I had a patient by the name of James who was at Vanderbilt, and I don't know how my name came up, but him. Maybe ... I call her Foamara.

Interviewer: That's fine. Yes, you can call her that.

Dr. Smith: [crosstalk 00:02:13] She was, maybe asked about kicking the door on some things I think we had to do. And she really Met and had dinner, the three of us, and talked. And she talked about my interests and things I was doing at the time. I was developing a museum exhibit with one of the other counties. [inaudible 00:02:49] up in school year. High school year. And we had talked from there. So that's how I got introduced to her. I don't ... now Mary, and Dr. [inaudible 00:03:09] I don't know [inaudible 00:03:12] She met them, I don't know if I introduced them to her, or how she met them.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dr. Smith: But I had aa patient whose last name was James who was pursuing his Master's at Vanderbilt. And she got us and Foamara together.

Interviewer: Okay, got it. Okay. So, a community connection, so to speak.

Dr. Smith: Right.

Interviewer: Okay. Can you describe what the planning and implementation process for the workshops was like?

Dr. Smith: Oh. That's way back. When we first started there was a lot of focus on the concept Wisdom of the Elders. How they, the elders, how the other situations, how do we bring those wisdom ... the elders and the youngest together to learn and share. So there are early programs, they maybe had a few, but there wasn't a consistent thing. There was issues with use, in terms of school.

But the elders just loved it. So over time, the youth kind of faded, and the elders were loving it so much we started developing programs that the elders would be interested in. And, I'm a history buff, so, Dr. Harvey was interested in art and Mary she's into genealogy. So the first outing, I had this interest in cemeteries, and so I had a number of meetings. Each of us folks, each of us focused on what we wanted to do and decided how many weeks it would take us.

I think I took the first round off. I think I started off in January. And I basically prepared information on the value of the cemeteries to the community, coming from an historical point of view. The customs of the first Africans, from coming over and burying people, and [inaudible 00:06:01] good land and all.

And my assignment to them, because I think there was a challenge then, to decide what cemetery they wanted to choose. They each had to chose a cemetery, and go out and take pictures. And make sure [inaudible 00:06:22] on it. Now that was also aided by the fact that John [inaudible 00:06:30], the county archivist, I've known John a long time, and he was interested in trying to identify,

quote, all the African American cemeteries in [inaudible 00:06:44] County. Because a book had just come out that was published by the [inaudible 00:06:50] County Historical Association that identified the white cemeteries.

And at one of the meetings I was challenged by a guy named Ernie [inaudible 00:06:58]. He said, "You know, there's got to be more black cemeteries here that we [inaudible 00:07:05].

That kind of fueled my thinking, that we'd never thought to ... I'm kind of rambling, but that's how I got on. That's part of my initial challenge, and maybe I think on encouraging patients to go out and explore, and try to search cemeteries. And the seniors actually really got into it, because a lot of their loved ones are there. And family members so, they really took to that.

Interviewer: Right, Right. So what would you say was the overall goal or objective of the workshops, for you? What did you want them to get out of it?

Dr. Smith: To learn history. Because there's not a lot written about African American history [inaudible 00:08:01] of the county. And for me, all my presentations are focused on what do African Americans still have from a historical point of view. And that's the cemeteries, the churches and the schools. So, because of my previous discussions with the county archivist and my [inaudible 00:08:28] on the ... I'm in the [inaudible 00:08:31] County Historical Society, so, cemeteries, that's like their own.

Interviewer: Okay. What was the process for each weekly activity? What were some of the things that you did in terms of activities, what kinds of supplies did you need? [crosstalk 00:08:52] Logistically.

Dr. Smith: I started introducing this concept to the seniors, so the initial couple sessions I basically made presentations. There's a large cemetery here, the Benevolent Cemetery. So I had some of the history on that, and I talked about that.

So I just talked about the history of cemeteries in general and where they are. And I talked about the Benevolent Societies. They're quite an outfit. And this priest I met that, who [inaudible 00:09:38] money to buy land to initiate African American cemeteries. So a couple of sessions on that. And with those sessions, you know, telling "You've got to decide on the cemetery, make a selection and this is what my expectations are."

And also in one of the early sessions I had John [inaudible 00:10:05] come in and talk from a [inaudible 00:10:07] perspective on cemeteries, the value of cemeteries. And then I had a mortician to come in, with Dale Funeral Home, who talked about the legalities involved in cemeteries. Access. I brought in some death certificates and let them look at them, and look at what information was on it. And that was good because from a genealogical I've got Mary. You know, that's a source of information for genealogy too.

So after the first sessions were dedicated to things like that, by that time we had started a [inaudible 00:10:54] about some cemeteries. Gone out and taken pictures. And brought some family, at least one family that they could talk about. And it turned out most of them had loved ones buried and Mary left them with a little genealogy even at that point.

So mainly, after the first two sessions, it was a matter of listening to people present. And in fact, I taped those presentations. I've got them on DVD, the presentations. The camera works isn't best, but I've got the tape. And the very last session I had paid to have enough DVDs made for everybody. But we looked at presentations and copied the last one. It was a fun thing to do.

Interviewer: That sounds great. Yeah. What was the timeline and the schedule? How many weeks, how many hours at a time, trying to stay ...

Dr. Smith: I think my first session was like six weeks. We started with, I want to say three hours first.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dr. Smith: What time did we start. We were starting around 11:00 and going around 2:00. And some of it was ... at the end it was for lunch, or something like that.

Interviewer: So it straddled the lunch time.

Dr. Smith: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dr. Smith: No, it didn't start at 11:00, it started at 10:00. I'm sorry. Because I remember rushing through the hospital getting my rounds down to get there and set up. Because I was still first presentation. I had gone, I had pictures, I had ... I talked about some projects and some communities where the youth had got together with some adults and they cleaned up cemeteries. So I had my computer available, and I was showing people on the screen also.

I'll tell you though, it was a lot of out-of-pocket expense for me.

Interviewer: Oh, was it?

Dr. Smith: But I was, you know, into history. I developed a PowerPoint presentation too, as part of my ... those first ...

Interviewer: PowerPoint, yeah.

Dr. Smith: Yeah, I got the PowerPoint presentation.

Interviewer: Yeah, you mentioned that you did presentations.

Dr. Smith: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, and then toward the end the participants did their own presentations. Which, I think it's safe to assume those were not PowerPoint.

Dr. Smith: No, no, no, no.

Interviewer: Okay. So getting to some of these expenses. What are some expenses that people need to keep in mind. That are needed to fulfill the workshop requirements?

Dr. Smith: Well we started from scratch. It helped me to have some computer skills. The big expense for me was because I had my own video camera, and I paid the videos we introduced and gave each senior a copy. That was the biggest expense.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dr. Smith: Now I assume that I got something from the county, the city provided the money for food.

Interviewer: Right, at Patterson Park.

Dr. Smith: I didn't have to buy a lot of paper and stuff. The cameras [inaudible 00:15:33]. A gift to [inaudible 00:15:38].

Interviewer: Oh, the cameras were provided. [crosstalk 00:15:45].

Dr. Smith: [inaudible 00:15:45] those kind of cameras?

Interviewer: Right. Okay, Okay.

Dr. Smith: That's a good hook though. I mean, coming in town you don't have to have a camera to go out and shoot the pictures. And somewhere on my computer I got pictures of [inaudible 00:16:11] and the cemeteries too.

Interviewer: Right. Okay. Besides costs being a potential challenge-

Dr. Smith: Time is the big [crosstalk 00:16:26]

Interviewer: Time.

Dr. Smith: Being a physician, and in practice, you know what. I didn't schedule out of the office or anything. I just ... Thursdays just happened to be my day off, I'd still make time for them. It was just time for me. If you love the history and you get

the know the people. And I think another thing, you know, a lot of them were my patients.

Interviewer: Oh. A lot of them were your patients.

Dr. Smith: Yes, some of them were, yes.

Interviewer: So you had that familiarity and the rapport. Right. Any other challenges or issues that could come up, and how you might resolve those?

Dr. Smith: Transportation, for some seniors, making all the sessions. Anytime you're dealing with a senior population some are going to get sick. And actually, one of the ladies passed away while we were doing that first year.

Interviewer: Oh, in the first year. Okay.

Dr. Smith: But again, you're dealing with seniors. Wisdom of the Elders tries bringing that wisdom to the seniors. The youth, it just didn't work with the youth. And if you try to capture the youth after school, that's a challenge too. So it just worked. I guess the problem kind of solved itself. We ended up we had a program in tune with the interests of the seniors.

Interviewer: Right. So making that connection between the seniors and the youth didn't quite work out this time around.

Dr. Smith: It didn't quite work out. I did it for three years straight. Of course now, at the end of the program, at the end of a cycle, when we would set out exhibits. You know, the youth was there at Patterson and [inaudible 00:19:13] Varsity, and [inaudible 00:19:12]. But doing the regular sessions, youth were not involved because of school.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Dr. Smith: But there's a lot of interest with the youth at the one time we set up the exhibit at the end. I mean lots of questions. I know for me, I built in ... to engage their interests I had questions and I even gave some prizes.

Interviewer: Oh.

Dr. Smith: This was when I did the churches. I had an exhibit, and I had information, and they had to go through each section and the individual who came up with the answers to the most questions got, I think I gave them \$10.00 or something, Just to engage their interest.

Interviewer: Yeah. Oh, that's really nice. That's really nice. So you're mentioning the exhibits. So this is the exhibit at Patterson Park at the end of the year.

Dr. Smith: It was at the end of each cycle. We would do up an exhibit.

Interviewer: Yes. What would you say is the purpose of that exhibit?

Dr. Smith: Well, like I said before, to do the wrap-up and be able to display what you've been doing for that time. And it's a time for the seniors to be able to show. They invite their relatives, and they come see what their loved ones have been doing all this time.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Smith: So it's kind of like a celebration at the end. But I think that's a very important part of it.

Interviewer: Celebrating. Showcasing their work.

Dr. Smith: Right. Especially when they done art. The art part. They really got into the art. That's something they can show. A lot of the collages, the paintings, depicting family memories, they would explain that.

Interviewer: Great. Do you know much about the process for planning and implementing the exhibition? What was the process for that like?

Dr. Smith: In terms of our end?

Interviewer: Yes. As the facilitator.

Dr. Smith: Well, we met and talked about some objectives and things. Everything we did ties in with showcasing the wisdom with us, that the seniors have in their heads. So just reinforce the theme. And so basically the three of us, Mary Watkins, myself and then Dr. [inaudible 00:22:38], her husband. So after that first session it's kind of almost on automatic. It's a matter of, "Well, what do you want to do?" And each of us decide what we want to do and see how it fits. How it's fit together, and it's just kind of a natural. We tried to try to just make everything flow together. Genealogy, and cemeteries, Art. Depicted scenes, family memories. Actually taking family photos and incorporating it into the art.

So, cemeteries are at the end of that life, but ... So after that first, the philosophy ... It's not we had to bring in new people to sell them on the idea. So basically just sit around and decide what we wanted to do. What each of us wanted to contribute for the next cycle. Now this last cycle I did not participate in.

Interviewer: And that was for this year?

Dr. Smith: Yes.

Interviewer: Right. Right. Okay. What issues, if any arose during, going back to a question about the exhibit. Issues about the planning and the implementation? Were there any issues? Barriers? Challenges?

Dr. Smith: As far as setting up some of the exhibits?

Interviewer: Yes. Yes.

Dr. Smith: Worrying about space. Since, the administration at Patterson Center, you know they got an award.

Interviewer: Oh. Wow.

Dr. Smith: They got some kind of state-wide award for senior programming. They didn't do it, we actually did it, but they made the space available. So they were very receptive to setting up tables and making sure I had what I needed. When I needed electrical cords for my computer. I need the screen, and all that. They were ... I did not experience them as a barrier.

Interviewer: That's great to hear.

Dr. Smith: You know, having a place like Patterson just made it wonderful. If you were going into a community and you didn't have a place like Patterson, that had some staff. Such as the janitors and the maintenance people trying to help you, that could be a challenge.

One reason I didn't do [inaudible 00:25:46] some health issues, and you know, lifting and carrying stuff. I guess that's the age of participants, when they're well.

Interviewer: Right. So it sounds like having a facility and a staff that's fully on board with this is extremely important.

Dr. Smith: Very important. People think that I had to load up all the stuff every week. That's a lot of stuff, projectors, sound hook up to my computer so it could be heard, projected in the place. You have to load that stuff up, and carry it someplace and set up. It's not something that's insurmountable. But again, we were blessed to have Patterson and the little bit it staffs.

Interviewer: Wonderful. I have a few questions about the participants themselves. Can you explain a little bit more about the demographics. So, they're retired, they're African American ...

Dr. Smith: I think they were retired individuals. Due to the time of the day, anybody who has a regular job, it would be extremely difficult for them to take off and be at that time of day. And of course in the evening, people are tired when they get off from work. So all the participants were retirees. And they all happened to be African American. And, all the sessions ... We only had two men.

Interviewer: Two men. Why do you suppose that happened?

Dr. Smith: Except at the last, another guy. Although the push was to try to get some men but ... went up with a guy who was retired from the VA, happened to be a nurse, and he was there. But basically, two men did the whole thing. Men. Why is it difficult to get men to do that? It was just them doing it ...

Interviewer: It's okay if you don't have an answer.

Dr. Smith: I really don't have an answer. I suppose it's about getting men involved in this process. Even coming to the exhibits, I didn't see any men coming through there.

Interviewer: Okay. Something interesting to ponder for the future perhaps. And how were they recruited into the program?

Dr. Smith: An issue of letters was sent to churches. But I think we had decided that we could only take 35 seniors. So all those notices went out to churches, and word of mouth. There was all this concern, what are we going to do if we get more than 35 people? Because I think that's all the money that they felt they could accommodate. Only 35. Of course, that was not really a problem. We didn't consistently get 35 participants.

Interviewer: How many do you think came on average?

Dr. Smith: 30.

Interviewer: 30?

Dr. Smith: Between 25, 30.

Interviewer: 25, 30. Okay. Do you think that was effective recruitment?

Dr. Smith: I would have loved to have seen more participants. But then on the other hand more participants would have meant having to generate more energy to reach that many more. I think of that number there's a core group of about 20 people you think would be there consistently, week in and week out. Other people kind of weave in and out. And those people who weaved in and out, it presented a problem because they'd get behind. Especially when they were doing the art work and the genealogy.

Interviewer: Do you think there are any other ways of recruitment that people could use. In addition to letters to churches and word of mouth at the community center?

Dr. Smith: I think if you personally went into the churches and talked to people. Talk to the ministers and speak to the Sunday school programs. Getting something in the mail, it's a cold letter. And I don't how many churches put a lot of emphasis on

reading things. I know years ago it was a big deal on Sunday morning, the pastors had time for communications to be shared with the congregation. But in recent years that's not been the case. I don't know whether they feel that takes away from the service. Now they put your letter up on the bulletin board, and you look at it. If you had someone to go and personally give the pitch.

Interviewer: That might be effective.

Dr. Smith: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. Right.

Dr. Smith: And I mention the churches because that's, in the African American community that's about the only place you're going to consistently get a group of people on a regular basis come together. Because they're not in schools.

Interviewer: Sure. Makes sense. Makes a lot of sense.

Dr. Smith: Oh, you do know that individuals were paid the first year. The participants got a stipend.

Interviewer: To participate?

Dr. Smith: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dr. Smith: The was the issue about the money. Not having over 35 people. There was a stipend. I just thought of it. They had a little stipend.

Interviewer: Right.

Dr. Smith: The last two years there has not been a stipend.

Interviewer: Okay. That sounds like it could get awfully expensive.

Dr. Smith: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: Fast.

Dr. Smith: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: Right. Do you think the participant, did they understand the goals and objectives of your workshops? Was that clear to them, as far as you know?

Dr. Smith: In my first couple of sessions, I would flash the goals up on the screen.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dr. Smith: These are the goals and objectives of my sessions. And I think to really sell them. Because you know, you walk in there and "Hey, I want to talk about cemeteries." That's so vague. You got to focus it down. I guess I should have ... When you talk about goals and objectives, then a plan exists. If I talked about looking at things, and want to do a [inaudible 00:34:52] with everybody else. Try to tie is in. So there are goals.

Interviewer: Okay. And it sounds as though you made that very clear to them. Okay. A couple more questions about participants, and then two more [inaudible 00:35:13] questions.

Was there there any concerns or issues that arose about the participants for you as a facilitator, and how did you or the program address any issues? For example there were only two men. That might be something to think about. But any other issues? You also mentioned transportation. What else comes to mind?

Dr. Smith: It was made clear that they had to provide their own transportation. My concern is certainly you start out with a core group of people. You'd like to have everybody there each session. But those who came every time, they would come on time. It gets to be a social thing, after. So those, once they decided to stick with the program, they stuck with it.

Interviewer: Yeah. They were devoted to it. Dedicated.

Dr. Smith: We did have ... I think it was the second year, we had had some younger teachers who had retired, and they came to a couple sessions and then we lost them. I don't know, whether they didn't feel like they were senior enough. But they seemed to ... they knew folks in there. Just an observation. The younger retirees, we didn't retain them like we did the older retirees.

Interviewer: Interesting.

Dr. Smith: Hey, you know if you talk about cemeteries, maybe the younger retirees don't feel as close to that. I think maybe if they'd started out with the art part, we could have captured them. The would have stayed?

Interviewer: Interesting, yeah. So maybe the sequence of the topics is important. Okay. Any other thoughts on that? On issues or concerns.

Dr. Smith: Yeah, I think that's sequencing. Because if you're doing art, you're working with your hands and you see something on a canvas. Where mine is head-stuff, you know? You go out and take pictures. And then when I started, when I did the second session, did another round on churches. But a lot of that is information and inviting them to go out and educate themselves. It's not something their

doing with their hands. Yeah, I think that's probably true with most folks. People they tend to engage the most physically. Engage with feeling and sight.

Interviewer: So do you mean that it's important to engage them in all these different ways? Physically ...

Dr. Smith: Yes.

Interviewer: Intellectually, like on all levels.

Dr. Smith: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. Rather than strictly heady stuff, or strictly working with their hands.

Dr. Smith: Yes. And I had some issues that, when I was approached about doing this session, being involved this year. I said I needed a break, and I felt the seniors needed a break. Because what I do is basically teaching, and exposing, and inviting them to think and get involved. So after three years with the group I said, they need a break from me, and I need a break from them.

Yeah, but with art, there are all kinds of things you can come up with that they can do with their hands. Mary, in terms of genealogy, of course that's going to the computer, and looking up stuff too, so.

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00:40:14]

Dr. Smith: If you look at the most reward- ... The comments I think, and the most rewarding experiences, I think it's been the art projects. Because it's color, and it's something they do with their hands. And it's something they can show their family, that they can take home and [inaudible 00:40:41]

Interviewer: Right. Gratifying to have a product that you can admire later.

Dr. Smith: Right.

Interviewer: Did you have an evaluation of the workshop each year?

Dr. Smith: Yes.

Interviewer: How did you evaluate the workshops?

Dr. Smith: We got the participants. I'm aware that the participants evaluated us. Yet I personally evaluate. When I did my sessions I was basically through. So I didn't go back and observe all the other sessions. I'd sometimes get up in the air. So it wasn't on a regular basis. But did I evaluate at the end of my sessions, when I accomplished my goals? I could check off everything I decided I wanted to do.

Now, I didn't evaluate the effectiveness from the senior's perspective. I think if you look at the senior's evaluation of our programs, they'd probably rate the section I do a little bit lower. Because again, it's not ... History. How do you make history shiny and new? At the time they can really get into "This is my family cemetery, and someone's buried here," and that. But that's not something shiny and new.

Interviewer: Right. I understand. It's not fun in the same way as colorful collages.

Dr. Smith: Yes, yes. So that may be a better way to go out and sell the program, "Hey, you're going to do this. This type of art. You can develop a family crest and all the stuff." That's something that they could see, it's very physical.

But then on the other hand, to make it work you've got to find ... The presenters have got to be interested in something. Find some folks who have a passion about something. Who's willing to take that passion, and are committed enough to it, to share it, to want to share it with a group of seniors. Because if you don't have Mary, she's interested in genealogy, then it's not going to happen. Because nobody's paid to do this. You just do it because you want to do it.

The art is, art is a passion for them, and they chose to take this passion and use it in a manner to interact with seniors to get them involved in the activity. So if you go into a community, you've got to find ... You should not only find a population that has the time, i.e. retirees who don't have to work. Who have the time to commit to doing it, but you've got to find, I wouldn't say we're community leaders, we're just individuals who ... I guess we're do-gooders.

Find a core group of do-gooders and you match it up, and that's how you run with the program. Because I'm going to ask about my own home town. Did you all think of having developed something down there? Which is not far away, about 50 miles down the road?

I don't know anybody down there who has a passion to do this type of thing. So you've got to find that individual. You've got to find somebody that the community trusts, and that's got a passion and that wants to work with seniors. I could do it, I can get by with any kind of group. I just love history.

Interviewer: So, all of this has been a beautiful segue into our question about lessons learned and about what you want to share with other communities. So this is all fantastic. Anything else that comes to mind, that you would want to give as advice to other people, other communities?

Dr. Smith: The program is great. It certainly satisfied my desire to want to share my passion. And I think it gives those seniors who participate something to do, and they look forward, and they socialize. So those are all good positive spin-offs. But, go in cold, into a community where you don't have a contact? It is going to be difficult.

Somebody's got to have an interest. How do you find that individual. I don't know.

I guess if you sent letters to churches and said "Hey, we got this great dynamic program, and we want to help seniors identify their roots." That kind of gets attention. And identify their family roots and history of the community. That would probably get seniors' ears. But will they come forward? I don't know.

I know me personally I've been able to do a lot of things in this community because I'm a physician, and people trust me. In the African American community, physicians and ministers have a reverence maybe that you don't find in other communities. Because there's so few of us.

Interviewer: And you work so hard for the community.

Dr. Smith: Yeah. But that's a shame because you've got all this. Something's that good, a good product. But how do you get the population to realize this is a good product, and this is something that if you just give it a little time, and really look at it, it can be beneficial. It can happen a number of ways.

You know, because of the activity of Wisdom of the Elders in this community, we evolved into another organization called the African American Heritage Society of Rose County. Which has been a big, huge, positive influence on this community. And had it not been for the presence of the Wisdom of the Elders, we wouldn't have this organization. Because I'll tell you several years back, I met some folks that tried to start an African American Heritage group and it went nowhere. And a number of the people who are participants in the Wisdom of the Elders they also belong to the African American Heritage Society of Rose County.

Interviewer: So things build on each other.

Dr. Smith: Right.

Interviewer: They build, and the timing issue.

Dr. Smith: Timing, timing issue.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Dr. Smith: See now, most people want to know about their own family. Their kids get ... Most people love their own family and they love their community. So maybe that's the seed you throw out. The Wisdom of the Elders is going to come, but maybe the initial hook is are you interested in getting involved in activities to learn about history, or family and the history of this community. Because they've got values. They're anchored in their family and their anchored in their community.

Interviewer: Yes. Yes. And that's a critical piece, it sounds like. Getting the anchors of the community involved. It will bring more people. It will bring the people in.

Dr. Smith: Right

Interviewer: Yeah. And they have the trust of the people.

Dr. Smith: Right.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Smith: Sometimes the people who come forward first are not the people that the community really trusts. They can have their agendas. And being an outsider, you don't always know the agenda of these people.

Interviewer: Right. That's right. And so, it sounds like that's more doomed to fail, that kind of initiative.

Dr. Smith: Right.

Interviewer: Yeah. Makes sense. Makes sense. Okay. Any last thoughts?

Dr. Smith: You've made me just kind of think about this kind of stuff.

Interviewer: I'm really glad to hear that.

Dr. Smith: I think in writing a manual you've got to find a universal hook.

Interviewer: Yes.

Dr. Smith: And I'm thinking a universal hook may not be to go in and talk about the Wisdom of the Elders, but a hook of taking people where they are. And that's in take advantage of their family, and the community they're in.

Interviewer: Which means they might have different kinds of workshops, potentially. Because they would be in a different place, space, different needs. Yeah, interesting.

But that's great advice, I think. Taking people where they are.

Dr. Smith: Yeah.

Interviewer: Instead of molding people.

Dr. Smith: I've come across a piece of information in the last few days that may be a hook for my family, for the community I'm from. You know how I said I could not think of anyone who could step forward. I've learned that the high school that I went to down there is one of only three remaining African American high schools still

standing in the state of Tennessee. It's an old structure. So, that piece of information may get somebody's ear. It's going to be, "I went there." I know that most of those folks went to that high school there

And even focusing up on, okay, what are we going to do with this information. Do we want to focus on developing a [inaudible 00:53:39]? Well, you're going to get the Wisdom of the Elders if you word it right. Most of the folks who are going to come forward are going to be the seniors in the community. And then whoosh, you start getting people coming together. It's just a matter of being creative. I used to tell the medical students that'd come to Nashville, "You're good if you can take a rock and make an interesting about it." That it. Become creative enough to do that.

Interviewer: Well thank you so much for your time. This has been incredibly helpful. And today, earlier, Claire and I were out interviewing some of the ladies who were participants a couple years back. And they raved about how wonderful you are. And, "Oh, Dr. Smith. He's so knowledgeable, and he has so much to teach us." And they're full of so much praise and they loved your workshops. So I thought I really should tell you that.

Dr. Smith: That's interesting. I realized how much I don't know. The more you learn, how much you realize you don't know.

Interviewer: Yes.

Dr. Smith: Be a life-long learner.

Interviewer: Exactly. And they are, as are you. And so, yes, what you've been doing with them and for them is invaluable and so enriching to their lives.

Dr. Smith: I appreciate you sharing that.

Interviewer: Of course, of course. Yes. So, if there's anything else that does come to mind, please feel free to reach out any time. [crosstalk 00:55:38] We're open to all the more nuggets of wisdom that you have, because you're full of it too.

Dr. Smith: [crosstalk 00:55:43]

Interviewer: And you're Claire's hero.

Dr. Smith: I think it's really commendable that the university would engage in this process. I don't know if you know, but way, way back when I was a medical students, and I was a [inaudible 00:56:03] at [inaudible 00:56:05]. And we went down into west Tennessee developed some health clinics down there. So, I've been out trying to change the world a long time.

Interviewer: It's working.

Dr. Smith: I was trying to change the world.

Interviewer: Yes. We need more people like you. Thank you, thank you.

Dr. Smith: I thank you for the comments.

Interviewer: All right.

Dr. Smith: Well, you have a good evening.

Interviewer: You too, you too Dr. Smith. You have a good evening, and a good rest of your week and weekend coming up.

Dr. Smith: Okay thank you. Bye.

Interviewer: Okay, all right. Good night.

Dr. Smith: All right. Good night.

Interviewer: Bye bye.