

Virginia Malone Hurd
The Roberson Project on Slavery, Race, and Reconciliation
May 27, 2019

[00:00:01.090] - Nikki Hamilton

This is Nikki Hamilton, and I am here with Virginia Malone Hurd. And we are here talking to Virginia as part of the Sewanee Black History initiative and learning about her life growing up in Sewanee. Today is Monday, May 27th, 2019. So thank you so much for being here with us, Virginia. And if you don't mind, would you please tell me your full name when you were born and where.

[00:00:35.770] - Virginia Malone Hurd

My name is Virginia Malone Hurd. My birthday is December 1st, 1966. Growing up, I lived on 155 Willie Six Road.

[00:00:45.620] - Nikki Hamilton

And you were born in Sewanee?

[00:00:46.820] - Virginia Malone Hurd

I was born in Sewanee.

[00:00:48.020] - Nikki Hamilton

At the Emerald Hospital?

[00:00:49.220] - Virginia Malone Hurd

At the Emerald Hospital.

[00:00:55.370] - Nikki Hamilton

Thank you for that. And so now, if you wouldn't mind just telling me a little bit about your family and your life growing up in Sewanee.

[00:01:07.530] - Virginia Malone Hurd

My mom's name was Alice Malone Hill. I am the youngest of four children. And my mom and my aunt and all of our kids, we all stayed in one house on 155 Willie Six Street. It was probably like nine of us in the house.

[00:01:28.630] - Nikki Hamilton

How many bedrooms?

[00:01:31.630] - Virginia Malone Hurd

Four.

[00:01:36.530] - Nikki Hamilton

Do you recall any stories from your childhood growing up here?

[00:01:42.290] - Virginia Malone Hurd

Well, all of our friends, we all got together. There was no games, like no computerized games. We would either play kickball or we would go ride bicycles or we were like run through the fields, go to Lake Cheston and swim. And then like, we'd all meet up and walk to school together. We went to school from kindergarten to 6th grade at Sewanee elementary. After that, we went to South Junior High, where we had to catch the bus from the 7th to the 9th grade. From the 9th through 12th we went to Franklin County High School. And after that everybody with their own separate ways. Some went to College, some chose not to. After I graduated, I moved to South Pittsburgh, and that's where I live now. And that's been 33 years ago.

[00:02:37.470] - Nikki Hamilton

What did you do when you went to South Pittsburgh?

[00:02:41.370] - Virginia Malone Hurd

Just work, several different jobs. Well, I'll take that back. I had my child in the 12th grade, and I graduated in June of 1985. I had her in September, and so she lived here with me a couple of months. And then we moved to South Pittsburgh with my sister.

[00:03:07.870] - Nikki Hamilton

Can you say your daughter's name and how old is she?

[00:03:10.690] - Virginia Malone Hurd

My daughter's name is Tamia Malone. She's 33, and she was born in Emerald Hodgson.

[00:03:15.680] - Nikki Hamilton

And where is she now?

[00:03:16.880] - Virginia Malone Hurd

She lives in South Pittsburg.

[00:03:18.080] - Nikki Hamilton

Does she live close to you or with you?

[00:03:22.730] - Virginia Malone Hurd

She lives with me. And I have a son who's 31. His name is Charles Malone.

[00:03:29.150] - Nikki Hamilton

And where is he?

[00:03:30.170] - Virginia Malone Hurd

He's in South Pittsburgh. And he has his own little family.

[00:03:35.930] - Nikki Hamilton

And how often do you come up here to Sewanee?

[00:03:39.470] - Virginia Malone Hurd

Not often. Occasionally, like when something's going on.

[00:03:44.030] - Nikki Hamilton

So like this weekend. Big weekend?

[00:03:47.690] - Virginia Malone Hurd

Yes. Or like someone will call and say, can you come- come up?

[00:03:52.970] - Nikki Hamilton

Do you have any memories from the days at Sewanee elementary that you can share?

[00:04:00.290] - Virginia Malone Hurd

I just remember, like going out on the playground and us playin'. Then, like behind the playground was like a smaller little playground. Sometimes we were allowed to go, and sometimes we weren't and... We would sneak off and go anyway.

[00:04:22.710] - Nikki Hamilton

And who were your friends?

[00:04:22.760] - Virginia Malone Hurd

Carl Hill, Eddie Newell. Sherry Newell, Nicky Newell, Jennifer Burnett, the Burnetts, Michelle Darwin.

[00:04:36.210] - Nikki Hamilton

What did y'all do in the summer? What were summers like up here?

[00:04:41.370] - Virginia Malone Hurd

Actually, just like, well, some played sports. Some did baseball. A lot of times we were at the Lake Shelton swimming. If not, we were at the gym, swimming. A lot of times we went to Bishop's Common.

[00:04:54.930] - Nikki Hamilton

What did you do there?

[00:04:57.330] - Virginia Malone Hurd

Play Ping pong, play pool.

[00:05:03.310] - Nikki Hamilton

How would you describe your neighborhoods here in Sewanee and how you interacted with the University? How would you describe...

[00:05:10.270] - Virginia Malone Hurd

I love it. I loved livin' in Sewanee, and I always thought it was a good place to raise your children. I thought it was a good place to be raised. If I had it to do, I would come back.

[00:05:24.830] - Nikki Hamilton

What about Sewanee made it a good place to raise your kids and live here?

[00:05:30.150] - Virginia Malone Hurd

I mean, 'cause I've been to other places, like Chattanooga, you know I'm saying you see a lot going on- not saying it's not going to happen here, but I've never seen it happen here. It's quiet, a lot of older people.

[00:05:47.950] - Nikki Hamilton

So during your years growing up here, were you aware of the changing times happening in the country? I know you're obviously younger, but I didn't know if you're aware of what was happening in the country in general, and if there was somebody that you would talk to about those changes or help you all as kids make sense of what was happening in the broader community and broader US.

[00:06:20.950] - Virginia Malone Hurd

I mean there are always older people to talk to that would tell us some things, some things wasn't to be told, some things a lot worse. And then, like, if we didn't know it at home, we could go down the street and the next parent would tell us.

[00:06:38.590] - Nikki Hamilton

Do you recall what those conversations were about just in general?

[00:06:45.950] - Virginia Malone Hurd

Mainly, it was like family oriented. You know what I'm saying? Like you was a family, you always stay together, stick together no matter what. And they, like, being a friend.

[00:07:01.490] - Virginia Malone Hurd

Yeah. Which brings me to the question of, is there some things that you learn from your parents or your teachers or your mentors that you feel was most valuable to you?

[00:07:15.950] - Virginia Malone Hurd

I was always told, you know what I'm saying, not to smoke. You know what I'm saying? But as I got older, I chose to smoke anyway. Not saying that that's the reason I have my trake, but I tell children to they don't smoke, so they know that smokin'... so.

[00:07:35.210] - Nikki Hamilton

Can you say a little more about your trake if it's not too personal?

[00:07:39.170] - Virginia Malone Hurd

Okay, I said- I was always told not to smoke, but as I got older, I chose to smoke anyway. When I went to the doctor before I got my trake, the doctor told me if I smoke another cigarette, maybe my last one that I ever smoked. So my husband, he goes and tries to hide my cigarettes because I knew if I wanted to smoke, I would smoke. You know, it wasn't that he hid 'em that I stopped, it just 'cause of the Grace of God.

[00:08:08.330] - Nikki Hamilton

Yeah. So you stopped smoking?

[00:08:08.580] - Virginia Malone Hurd

Mhm.

[00:08:09.780] - Nikki Hamilton

When was the last time you had a cigarette?

[00:08:10.980] - Virginia Malone Hurd

I haven't had a cigarette since 2000.

[00:08:17.250] - Nikki Hamilton

Oh, wow, congratulations. Just one last question here, are there one or two things that you would want people to know about your childhood or growing up here in Sewanee that you feel like this is the one or two things I want people to know about my childhood here?

[00:08:36.750] - Virginia Malone Hurd

I mean, I want 'em to know that this is a very good place to live, I mean because it is a very good place to live. I mean, and back then, when we were growing up, it was a lot to do. Like now everybody's on their phones or computers and stuff like that. We didn't have that, we didn't even really think about nothing like that. All we wanted to do was to get outside. And if we wasn't at home, we was at a friend's house and nobody really thought about cars, we was all on bikes. It was riding bikes. If you have one, somebody would double you.

[00:09:13.470] - Nikki Hamilton

What were some of the things y'all were doing, other than riding your bikes, like when you were at your friends houses what were some things you did to entertain yourselves?

[00:09:20.530] - Virginia Malone Hurd

Really we was all outside, we was all outside, we were all playing kickball, if we wasn't playing kickball, we was playing softball. If we wasn't doing that, we was playing hide and seek-

[00:09:34.670] - Nikki Hamilton

Nine seat?

[00:09:34.910] - Virginia Malone Hurd

Hide and seek-

[00:09:35.040] - Nikki Hamilton

Oh, hide and seek!

[00:09:35.170] - Virginia Malone Hurd

Yes, or we was racin' each other up and down the road.

[00:09:37.970] - Nikki Hamilton

Was the pool there when you were growing up?

[00:09:40.730] - Virginia Malone Hurd

Yes. And we would go to the gym and swim. I think back then, it was like, maybe a dollar to swim. If not there, we could go to Lake Cheston.

[00:09:56.970] - Nikki Hamilton

So is there anything else that you would want to tell us about your experience going up in Sewanee?

[00:10:08.710] - Virginia Malone Hurd

I mean, I just had a good childhood and everybody here, I mean, was like our parents. Not only our mom, our dad, everybody. Because if you was with their child and they got in trouble then you got in trouble, too, so.

[00:10:22.630] - Nikki Hamilton

Yeah. And then just one last question, given your experiences growing up here, how would you say that shaped your perspective on life in general?

[00:10:40.490] - Virginia Malone Hurd

I really think living here was really good because, like, I've been to other places, I've seen how other people live, and we've been truly blessed. And this was a very nice place to live. Nice people, nice neighborhood. I mean, and like, everything was walking distance. So...

[00:11:06.130] - Nikki Hamilton

It was easy.

[00:11:08.890] - Virginia Malone Hurd

Mhm.

[00:11:08.940] - Nikki Hamilton

Well, if you don't have anything else to say, thank you so much for your time today. It's been a real honor and privilege to hear your stories, and so thank you for sharing it with us, and we really appreciate it. And thanks for all you did to make this barbeque happen. I saw you in there working really hard. So thank you, Virginia.

[00:11:29.410] - Virginia Malone Hurd

Thank you.