

RICHARD ALBRECHT

Interview 205a

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ABSTRACT: In this interview with Jonathan Gerland, pharmacist and former Diboll School Board member Richard Albrecht discusses his tenure on the school board and the major issues of his day. The interview concentrates on the desegregation and integration of Diboll's schools and Mr. Albrecht discusses his reasons for running for school board, his interactions with the other board members and school administrators, as well as community members during the integration process.

Jonathan Gerland (hereafter JG): My name is Jonathan Gerland today's date is July 29, 2010. I'm at the History Center today with Mr. Richard Albrecht who I believe if I'm not mistaken you came on the school board at Diboll Independent School District in April of 1965. I believe you came on the board with Mr. Pavlic, Carl Pavlic.

Richard Albrecht (hereafter RA): That is true, yes.

JG: So, maybe to begin, we may jump around a little bit but, just how did you come to serve on the school board, maybe why, just what brought you to serving on the school board?

RA: Well, at that particular time there were several of us younger people then who had children in school and we were concerned about whether they would have sufficient background when it came time to go to college to be accepted into college. And several of us got together and met at one time, Carl Pavlic, Mr. Stubblefield, Mr. Denman, Stacy Cooke, myself and discussed the problems we thought the school had and we decided that a couple of us would run for school board that year and then maybe a couple of more run the next year to try to, I guess pack the school board so we could make some changes that we thought needed to be made. At that time, of course, we had Mr. Wilbur Pate and he had been there a number of years and we thought time had passed him by and it was time to make some changes at the top. So Carl and I ran for school board that year and the others worked behind the scenes to try to help get us elected. As it turned out we got elected and then a year later Mr. Cook and Mr. Shepherd ran and they got elected so it wasn't really necessary to make the change we had anticipated because Mr. Pate was ready to retire and he retired the end of that year I believe. So, it all turned out for the best and we had a good relationship on the school board. There were at that time the other three members of the board were, I guess you shouldn't say that you were college educated and they weren't or something, but they didn't feel the need I don't believe quite for the background the children needed. They didn't feel that they weren't getting it in Diboll and I should say that the kids were able to go to college, but they had to work that much harder I think than they had to later on down the line because they were better prepared.

JG: So, just to summarize basically your reason would be, and tell me if I'm not expressing it correctly, but just a general concern about education quality overall. If that was true, where did integration, racial integration factor into any of those concerns? Did it ever come up in any of those meetings before you came on the school board? Was that ever mentioned, discussed, talked about?

RA: Not as such whether we should integrate or not but, Carl and I when we were running for the board we went over to the Temple School at that time, the black school, and everything was suppose to be separate but equal. And if it had been naturally things might be different than they are today but anyway, we went over there and we were just amazed that they didn't have anything to work with at that school. We went to the chemistry and biology lab and there was not a test tube, not a microscope not anything. And Mr. Massey the principal was doing the best he could with what he had but it just wasn't right that they didn't have anything to work with; they just had to get by.

JG: Now, I've asked everybody a little bit about their own personal background which includes their education. You've eluded to that a little bit but just for the sake of the interview go ahead and tell us a little bit about your own personal background maybe, you don't have to go into a lot of detail, but just maybe where you were born, where you were raised, just your family values, just what type of family and then your own education as well.

RA: Okay, well I was born in Casa Grande, Arizona. My father was a minister but he died when I was ten and my mother was a school teacher and eventually became the first female principal in that area in Arizona. And I went to the University of Arizona, graduated in 1951 with a BS in pharmacy. When I went to school we had a small black school, the town I lived in didn't have many black people but it had a small black school with fifty or sixty students in it and it was right next to the junior high school. And while I was in high school they went ahead and integrated without being required to it was just the thing to do.

JG: Now that was in the...?

RA: That was in...they integrated in 1949, I believe it was.

JG: Forty-nine, okay, wow!

RA: Yes, because we had some black kids on the basketball and football teams with us and so forth. But and we had always gone to school with Mexican kids. They put the Mexican children if they couldn't speak English for the first two grades in separate rooms but they immersed them in English pretty much and started them in third grade they were with us. In fact, I just talked to a friend of mine who was one of those students and he is a doctor of education now but I never thought he would finish high school, but anyway.

JG: So you came from a fairly progressive community background and education was a key I'm assuming from your mother's experiences. So, that is interesting. I'm sorry I kind of cut you off. Was there anything you needed to add?

RA: That is okay.

JG: Okay, well what brought you to Diboll?

RA: Well I was working in Arizona for a fellow who had, well I didn't care about working for him so much and there was no opportunity in Arizona even back at that time much for independents to have their own store.

JG: You talking about as a pharmacist?

RA: Yes, because the California chains had already taken over a good part of the state so we just came out and I took the state board here. And Mr. Hatton Simpson from Tyler called me. He was president of the board at that time and offered me a job and so they sent me to Lufkin. And, we moved to Lufkin in 1961 and then he moved me down to open a new store in Diboll which was over across the road over here. I stayed with him until 1964 and then a friend and I opened a small store in the Dixon Furniture building there.

JG: Here in Diboll?

RA: Yes.

JG: Who was your partner at that time?

RA: Well Chester Anding had a small pharmacy up in Lufkin and...

JG: What was that last name?

RA: Anding, A-n-d-i-n-g.

JG: Okay.

RA: He was my partner; I bought him out after three years.

JG: Okay, now you mentioned your children and the background of parents who were concerned about the quality of education in the community. So, tell us a little bit about your children, how many, what ages were they?

RA: Well my oldest child is a girl, she's at that time we moved here she was five and anyway she went to school here. She finished sixth in her class and she started to college at Stephen F. Austin and she messed around and played and went out and she eventually joined the service. She spent four years in the Air Force, two years in Guam. And then

she went back to Stephen F. Austin and got her teaching degree. She did that for a year, went back in the Air Force for officer training and was officer for about four years when she met her husband and she lives right outside of Tampa, Florida.

JG: Okay.

RA: My son was three when we moved here and he was salutatorian of his class and he went to college down at the University of Houston and is a pharmacist and owns his own drug store in Pineland right now.

JG: Okay, now so you were on the school board I forgotten how long?

RA: From 65 to 77.

JG: Okay, so you were on the school board the whole time that your daughter was in school?

RA: Yes, my son too.

JG: Your son too.

RA: Yes, I got to give them both their diplomas. But, my youngest daughter wanted me to stay on but I got off the year before she graduated. She was third in her class and she is a school counselor over at Drippings Springs, outside of Austin.

JG: Okay, we may come back to them in the context of, you know, just information that they might have shared with you or if you asked them about the integration process. But, going back specifically to the integration issue, where would you say it was as an issue when you came on the board in April of '65? I know there were a lot of other things going on at the time but, where would you say that was you know, as a pressing need? I don't want to lead you on but...

RA: Well of course it was a need because of the condition the school was in and what they had but, really as far as I'm concerned I don't recall a lot of discussion about integration. Like you said, our problems were monetary more at the time than they were integration. Of course, it wasn't long until it came up.

JG: Right, well I think in going back and looking at the school board minutes in May of '65 it was, I don't know if it was the first meeting that you attended but, it would have been one of the earliest of course, was when the Freedom of Choice plan was adopted. I think Carl Pavlic made the motion to adopt it and you seconded it. I thought that was kind of interesting that...especially in the context of what you were saying in how you and Mr. Pavlic came to serve on the board. So, the two new guys were the ones who at least made the motion and seconded to do that.

RA: I don't...it doesn't really ring a bell with me.

JG: Well, that is the thing about oral history it's always interesting to what sticks out in peoples memory and what doesn't and that kind of thing.

RA: Excuse me, could I have some water?

JG: Sure, let me step up here and get some bottled water right here.

RA: Oh, that is great, thank you.

JG: Well, just to maybe if this will refresh your memory, what had just immediately happened before you and Mr. Pavlic came on board was there was a lot of consolidation of the schools across the county but where Diboll was concerned the Beulah and Burke students. In fact I believe that is how Mr. Capps came to serve on the board and he eventually became president of the board I guess during yours and Mr. Pavlic's time or at least there in the beginning. Anything you can remember about that, just some issues with that? I know funding might be, but the influx of new students, the need for facilities maybe?

RA: Well, gosh right at that time...I don't recall much about it. I know that the people at Beulah and the people at Fairview weren't thrilled about coming in with Diboll but because of monetary situations it became necessary. And our facilities we did of course we did have a need and it wasn't too long after Buddy Temple came on the board that we got our first gym over here. Well, it was our first building project. But the buildings were all run down and needed a lot of work. The school owed \$50,000 which doesn't sound like much now, but at that time we were in debt \$50,000 when he came on the board and we went and visited with Mr. Temple and he agreed to get us out of debt provided we budgeted right and didn't get in debt again. And, as far as I know we've never had that problem since at least we didn't while we were on the board. But, I just don't recall any.

JG: Okay, that is good. Now, you mentioned Mr. Temple, Arthur Temple Jr., Buddy's father, and this is a question I've asked everybody as well. I've tried to do it without leading you own or putting words into your mouth, but overall just did he have any role in the integration process, Mr. Arthur Temple Jr.? Did he...what role, non role, how would you...I'll start off real broad and maybe we will get more specific?

RA: Mr. Temple as far as I know never said anything to the board or the superintendent or anything about integrating. Since the integration I know he has said in a hundred speeches probably that he integrated the schools. And, I have no doubt but what he asked the feds to come down and talk to us. Which, they didn't talk to us they sent a letter and talked to Mr. Foster who was the superintendent at the time.

JG: Who took Mr. Pate's place?

RA: Yes, and they told him that we were going to be the first school to integrate in this area and I just know that Mr. Temple sent him down here because he himself didn't have

anything to do with it as far as telling us or...but he bragged about it from then on. So I don't have any doubt but what he did that and it was the thing to do I think.

JG: Well you answered some of the specifics and that was did he ever approach you, the school board, if you knew of any talk or anything like that and I think everybody has pretty much answered the same way that "no he didn't come directly." And again, you eluded to a few other things that jogged my memory, and I'll try to put it in the form of a question, but just a little bit of background at the time, you know, Diboll had just recently incorporated as a municipality in '62. It was very progressive in a lot of ways of course the plywood plant I think came in '64, opened in '64. The company, Temple Industries at the time, to make room for the plywood plant was where the historically black neighborhood was and so, a lot of those houses were moved out and anyways there was federal money coming into Diboll.

RA: Yes.

JG: The new public library was a federally funded project, the housing projects were some of the earliest Housing and Urban Development projects and so, if you look back historically a lot of those pieces do fit into the puzzle with the federal involvement with the schools. And, of course '64 was the Civil Rights legislation which gave teeth I guess to the Brown vs. School Board of Education in 1954. But, it's interesting I appreciate your answer there about his role direct or indirect of the company. What about talk on the town and if you wanted to comment on that go ahead, about Mr. Temple?

RA: Well you know on the board when it came time to vote on it, it was a four to three split and Mr. Connor, Mr. Smith and Mr. Capps voted against it and the other four of us voted for it. And that made it difficult because a lot of people then thought well the three who voted against it didn't help the situation any because they said it wasn't necessary. Even though the federal people had said we had to do it they just didn't believe we had too. It seemed as though they would have been willing to spend money to fight it which would have, you know, wouldn't have ended well from their point of view anyway. But, it made it difficult in the town. Every time I hear Mr. Temple say "I integrated the school" I thought well he maybe did but, he didn't pay the price because Carl and I being in business in town boy we paid the price. I had been in business one year for myself and my business dropped fifty percent that year and Carl's dropped too. I don't know how much, but I had one gentleman and I appreciated him, I don't know if should even say his name or not but, Mr. Charles Morris, he was a fine gentleman and he and his family traded with me. After integration he came in and told me he said he respected me and what I felt I had to do, but he just couldn't trade with me anymore under those circumstances because he didn't think it was right to integrate and he didn't want black people and white people going to school together. Well, little less than a year later I admired him because he came back and told me he had made a mistake. And, what broke the ice with him was he took his mother to the hospital and she was on welfare and she had to share a room with a black lady and he raised cane trying to get that changed and it didn't work. He was man enough to come and say that he was wrong. I always thought

well of him for that reason. But I never heard so much said about integration it was just the fact that people quit trading with me.

JG: Well, that is interesting. I'm glad you mentioned that. That is some follow up questions was you know, if constituents who elected you ever came to you and talked to you about it or anything like that.

RA: Of course when it came time to run for the board again Carl and I won it a lot but people by that time had come to accept it whether they wanted to or not and everything went well from then on. The integration I thought went very well, there was just never any big major problems that I saw. That has happened a lot and from what I hear other people say and my daughters teaching in other schools that their boys got along really well. There was very little problems with the boys in fighting or anything, but the girls it was tough. If there was a fight it was girls fighting.

JG: We've heard some of those stories. So, you got that information from your children then?

RA: Yes.

JG: Did you ever ask your children, you know both as a parent and as a person on the school board, you know, how is this working? Do you ever remember any kind of discussions like that? How was the integration working? Now that...we'll let's see I guess your sons whole experience would have been an integrated experience right? If he was only three when you...

RA: Yes, he was born in '58 so he started to school about...yes.

JG: Okay, but your daughter might have...would she have gone to school any, maybe a couple of years or not?

RA: Yes, just one year I think because she went to the first grade at St. Cyprians and second grade up here.

JG: Okay, okay, and really just so you understand where my questioning was coming from, is if maybe they had gone...had a little bit of an experience of going just with white children and then now integration begins and was it different or anything like that. That may not be put...

RA: Really I don't recall that they ever commented on it. They might tell something that went on about a little tussle between this one or that one whatever but they never commented on it and both, well in fact all my children had some black friends at school. It wasn't, they never had a problem with it that I know of in any way. Of course, they didn't always tell me everything so.

JG: Yes sir, yes sir. What about some of the individuals involved in the process, I'll throw out a few specifics but for instance...I don't know who to throw out first...let's start with Willie Massey. What can you remember about Willie Massey and what would you care to share about him in the process?

RA: Well Willie was a fine gentleman. As a said Carl and I went over there before we were elected and he showed us around and he never ran down the school board or anything as far as not giving him enough support which we didn't do, hadn't done. But Willie was a gentleman and a pretty good politician. He knew how to get along and I think we made him principal of the school over there as I recall. I think it was a difficult transition for him because there are some children and some parents, you know, who still didn't like the idea of a black person telling them what to do or telling their children what to do. But overall he did a good job but I think he was glad when retirement came. Now, his wife Mrs. Massey, of course she was a wonderful lady and an excellent teacher and just the finest lady and as fine as anybody I've ever known. She may have had one or two people who didn't want their child in her class but, overall most white people were just as glad their child was in her class as any.

JG: What about Coach Simmons, the high school athletics?

RA: Jim Simmons?

JG: Yes sir, the football coach and athletic director, do you remember anything about him? He was actually hired just before your time.

RA: As far in relation to the integration I don't, I don't recall much about...of course I recall that we played Dunbar High School which was all black soon after we had integrated and everybody was scared to death. I think we had about as many lawmen as we did people attending the ballgame, but the stadium was packed.

JG: Was that here in Diboll?

RA: Yes, that was the old stadium over here. It was I think they said our stadium would hold 2000 people. I think they said there were about 5,000 people there and because they both had good teams. They may have been undefeated when they played each other at the time and Dunbar won but all the kids on the field on both sides conducted themselves well and the crowd did too. There wasn't a need for the officers really.

JG: According to the school board minutes Jim Simmons was one of several candidates for the head coaching job. And again this was before your time, but it was interesting and I hesitate to mention it because I might quote it wrong, but he was essentially hired or the candidates were asked the question about an integrated sports program. That was sort of a litmus test "would you play black students and would you have an integrated physical education program?" And, the successful candidate had to answer yes to both of those. Some of the students who we have interviewed, Louis Landers for instance, credits

Coach Simmons with that initial integration for welcoming and encouraging the black athletes to come over and welcomed them into the program to help smooth things over.

RA: Like I said, I'm not familiar with it at all.

JG: Okay, anyone else, I won't throw out specific names but, anybody else that comes to your mind involved with the process, faculty members?

RA: There was Mrs. Odyessa Wallace that was in the black faculty. She was a fine lady too and she taught here for a lot of years afterwards. She taught both of my children at that time in the junior high, they were under different teachers but she had them all and she was a good teacher and a good citizen and a good supporter. I think she supported integration and she didn't, she wasn't out spoken about integration but she just lived a good life that supported it and she got along well with the white students too. I'm trying to think who else there was over there at that time, Mr. Jeffero, Algianon Jeffero, of course he left, it didn't have anything to do with integration. He was Ag teacher and so forth.

JG: I actually interviewed Mr. Jeffero and he went from that into scouting, scout master full time as I understand. Some of it we think may have not directly related to integration but maybe indirectly as part of the issue we think is that as the schools integrated really what you had in those first year or two were black students coming to the white school.

RA: Yes, yes.

JG: And, really what was happening the black school was losing students and therefore, in some cases teachers. Mr. Jeffero left and it was kind of both a cause and an affect. I know Mr. Massey was concerned about not having enough students to make it and just how that would affect the overall schools. Even though they were still segregated it was still the Diboll School system and that did affect funding and many other matters at the state level. But you know in the big context of everything you know, it was change across the board. Let's see we talked a little bit about Mr. Pate, anything you remember about the transition between Mr. Pate and Mr. Foster. I think they might have served for a few months together to kind of get Mr. Foster up and going. Again, I don't want to put words in your mouth.

RA: Mr. Pate was a fine man and gentleman like I said, he was past his prime and he didn't...you couldn't really, according to the way I remember, you couldn't get him to commit to being behind the program. He didn't, I feel like he didn't like it and so he didn't put his best effort forward but I think he cooperated well with David Foster. Mr...of course David Foster I could just say everything good about him because he was an outstanding gentleman and it really didn't matter if Mr. Pate was there to help him or not because he knew what he wanted to do and took care of it.

JG: Do you remember the process about Mr. Foster being hired, selected, and I know really nothing about that, but I was just wondering if anything stood out in your mind

about how he was selected to be the replacement for someone who had been here for so long.

RA: No, we interviewed several people. We just let it be known that we were looking for a new superintendent. David was over at Stephen F. Austin and he came and the first go round I voted for somebody else and I've felt kind of bad about that ever since because he was a wonderful superintendent and we've had a good number of people apply and I think they were all talked with about handling the integration business and going through it and David just knew what he wanted and how it should be done and if it wasn't right he wasn't going to do it. He was just...well he was as good a superintendent as we ever had. We had of course while I was on the board we had Mr. Pate there a year or two and then David for about 12 or 14 and Don Robbins. Don came from the state, he worked for the state. He went around taking care of troubled schools, getting their problems taken care of and their debts and so forth. Wilmer-Hutchins up around Dallas and so forth he was with them a couple of years. The state seemed various places and he decided he wanted to be a superintendent on his own. He came and he was an excellent superintendent too. After that I don't know about any of the rest of them. They all, you know, knew that integration was here and here to stay and so it wasn't ever any problems with them. I mean, they supported it.

JG: Do you remember, from some of the things you've said you may have already answered it, but maybe not the process as far as discussions at the meetings themselves about the integration issues of "what are we going to do and how are we going to do it." I mean certainly if you can recall some specifics that would be good, but just some of the bigger factors involved such as disposition of the teachers, you know, when we are going to integrate the schools and maybe the facilities, you know, are we going to use this, which campus is going to be what, is it going to be adequate facilities here and there, the cafeterias, the transportation, social interaction, just the whole experience I guess. Do you recall anything specific about just that part of the process?

RA: I can't remember anything specific about it. There was a lot of discussion about the teachers. You hate to say well we discussed maybe some of the teachers over at the Temple School weren't qualified but, they were there teaching and so immediate integration I think we kept everybody there but, we did feel that there were a few teachers that weren't up to par. The superintendent I know Mr. Foster looked into their background and what they had done at the schools and so forth and we...feeling like we had to keep a few of them we put them I think in programs that we felt they could handle without causing a...without short changing the kids, both the black and the white kids. It may not sound right but, anyway that is I believe that is one of the things that happened. I don't believe that any of them were put out but, we just kind of waited until retirement came along. Of course there were some poor white teachers too and I think that when Mr. Foster came on board he went over all of them very well and we had some left what had been at both schools.

JG: Y'all felt comfortable with Mr. Foster's decisions and what was done?

RA: Yes and he was aware that we would be looked at closely by the feds to make sure that our staff was integrated and he made sure that there was reasons for those to leave that did leave. But, other than that as far as facilities I think the recommendation was that the Temple School over there would be the junior high. Of course there were just the three schools at that time. At first some of the community was concerned about their children going on that side of town but, it once the school got spruced up and some money was put into it, it looked better and Mr. Foster had the way the buses ran lined up and the places where the parents could park and so forth and it all went well. People after the first week of school the people weren't concerned any more, to the best of my knowledge.

JG: Okay. Now you were on the school board twelve years.

RA: Right.

JG: During that time of course change happens on a daily basis but, over the course of a twelve year experience that you had anything that sticks out in your mind as major issues in that twelve year period? And if so, where and how was integration in that? When would you say that integration was completed? I guess where I'm coming with that, we know the dates of when, you know, the school board met and this and that but, as far as from a person on the school board well that issue is completed. I guess I'm also putting this into the context of for instance Lufkin's experience where it drug on and on and on anything you want to comment on that or I didn't really ask a very good question.

RA: Well I think you know the first year there were a lot of little problems but overall everybody got along well. Even though I live in Lufkin now it just tickled me to death that we did it so well in Diboll and Lufkin got screwed up on it all. (laughter)

JG: Did anyone on Lufkin school board ever approach you or the school board in Diboll like what are ya'll doing how are y'all doing it?

RA: Not, no they may have talked to Mr. Foster but I'm not aware of it.

JG: Because really the South, everybody was going through the process. Everybody's process was unique I guess.

RA: Well Lufkin always looked down on Diboll so they wouldn't want to come down and ask us how something was done. But, they sure envied us having David here as superintendent because he was a whole lot better than who they had at the time. I don't even remember who it was, but our whole situation just went so well here. I think the black churches here even met at their meetings. Some places the black churches raised cane and so forth and weren't much help but, the pastors here were help and they came to the schools on opening day of integration and so forth. Rev. Simmons and I can't think who the other man in particular was.

JG: So they were on the campus the first day?

RA: Yes, I guess they were pretty much around out front and so forth just to be there if any problems happened.

JG: I don't really understand what you were saying about the black churches.

RA: The pastor's hadn't ever stirred up any ill feelings about how they were treated or anything, how the kids were treated. And they encouraged the people, you know, the black people that went to church there to get along. They probably did better at encouraging people than the white. I can only speak of my church but I don't think that anything was ever said at my church that I know.

JG: One way or the other.

RA: Yes, yes.

JG: Okay.

RA: I think the black churches were a help in that because they can be a help or a hindrance sometimes it seems like but, they were good. Overall I think being a company town everybody I think felt like they knew Mr. Temple was in favor of it. I think everybody knew that and I think they felt like they should get along.

JG: Some people have put it this way that, you know, Mr. Temple may not have ever addressed directly to anyone or at least anyone in the capacity on the school board or something like that but, the phrase Stacy Cooke used was "he certainly set the tone." Just through his leadership he set the tone and everybody knew what eventually he wanted without him specifically saying what he wanted.

RA: Yes.

JG: Anything, going back to my question about other issues, anything...and it doesn't have to be integration but, in that twelve year time just your experience on the school board that really stood out. Like I said, you and Mr. Pavlic came on the same time and I think went off the same time.

RA: Yes.

JG: And y'all were also we might say local merchants and I appreciate you sharing that about how you came on about the concern that you had.

RA: When we went off the school board then, I was elected, appointed, whatever it is, to Region Seven service center board so, I was on it for six years. Carl went on city council before too long and then eventually I went on city council with him. But school board is much more interesting and exciting than city council is. At that time we had things that well all our facilities weren't up to par for the handicapped and we ran into that a lot in

the region meeting too. You know, it doesn't matter if it's only one handicapped everything has to be up to par and sometimes you wonder if it's really necessary, but it's kind of some people get stirred up about it as much as they did integration. Some of the schools really hated to spend the money that was required but, I don't...we had...well I know one of the things that I was president of the board one time and one of our teachers was...

JG: Now is this the Diboll School Board?

RA: Yes, one of our teachers was caught using marijuana and of course at that time marijuana was, you know, it's not like today so much and so right away we fired her. So we had to hold a hearing, hold a court almost with her lawyer and our lawyer and I had to conduct the meeting. The crowd came and we had it in the school library and it was just filled to overflowing. Anyway, we had to hold a hearing for her and boy that had me so nervous I just about had diarrhea. (laughter) Those kind of things then didn't go that badly.

JG: So, that was more stressful than integration. (laughter)

RA: It was, it really was for me. (laughter) We upheld our vote seven to nothing and got rid of her. Sometimes I think back, we had one young lady at that time of course if a young lady got pregnant in school out she went. And, we had this young lady got pregnant and so we let her go and her folks and her sister asked us to please don't do that. But, no we would send the teacher to go to the house and help her now and then but, anyway she had the baby and eventually she finished school and raised the child and just raised a wonderful child. She didn't get married for a number of years until the child was just about grown and this child is active in the schools and I think she may be married to a coach. I've told my wife so many times that that just bothers me that we did something like that. But, anyway that is the way it was done at that time.

JG: Yes sir. Did you serve on any committees during your time on the board? You mentioned you were chair, president of the board for awhile but, any other...and I just mention that mainly to see if that will jog your memory about issues or anything?

RA: Oh, I don't think we did much as far as committees or committee meetings. Of course, maybe they told you, Buddy probably will about building this gym over here and not using cypress wood to build it out of. We thought Buddy was going to stroke out at that meeting. He just couldn't believe that Carl and I and Mr. Capps and Mr. Connor voted for brick. And Buddy said, "This is a wood town, how can you build it out of brick when it's a wood based town?" But, anyway I still think it was the right thing to do.

JG: Interestingly when I first met with Harold Maxwell about the History Center project and he cautioned me to not let Mr. Temple, Arthur Jr., talk me into building a metal building. (laughter)

RA: I really don't recall any kind of committees or things. At that time we didn't even go to state school board convention and stuff like that. I don't know we were...I guess

Carl and I were too busy with our own businesses to worry about any of that. We probably should have, we might have been better school board members.

JG: Well, Mr. Albrecht I believe you've covered all my basic questions. Just in that overall context I certainly didn't ask all the questions that maybe I should have or to...anyway so I wanted to give you the opportunity if there is anything that you would like to say or comment on, give you the opportunity anyways.

RA: Well not really much. We were always proud of the Diboll Schools and I know when we were on the board especially after Mr. Foster had been here several years we had a lot more people wanting to transfer from Lufkin down here and from schools around than we had wanting to go out because we did have a good school with a good strong academic background.

JG: Would these be white and black students?

RA: Yes, both and it...I don't...I'm not familiar enough anymore with how the school operates and everything. People seem to think that it is going fine. There was a time I thought that perhaps they didn't have as strong a superintendent as they should have had. Seems like they kind of jumped around every three or four years for a while. But, I hope that they will keep the academics strong. It's so important I think.

JG: And again, that is coming from your education background and the sciences. How would you...I know I said that was all my questions, but in that context because I remember something you said early on in the interview, you know, with your science background and medicine, you specifically mentioned test tubes over at the black school so, where would you say the white school was even at that time? Say with the sciences and then once integration happened where was that as a concern especially with your background, the science program?

RA: We had...as far as the white schools we had a good science teacher in high school in Bill Greer who was an excellent teacher. But, at the same time the chemistry lab here at Diboll High School didn't have much of anything either. That was...science wasn't worried about too much. I think Mr. Greer taught every science there was that was taught, biology, chemistry and that was one of the things that we were concerned about when I say we were talking, wanting our kids to be ready for college. We wanted them to have a good background because, if you haven't had some chemistry in high school boy it's tough when you sit in that big class in college and try to absorb it. It slowly got better but we never, we never had a real good science program I'm sorry to say the whole time we were in there, especially in laboratory sciences. I don't know, not enough students were interested in it so, I know Bill Greer he said he could only do so much because there just wasn't the interest.

JG: Right.

RA: And if the students don't want to take it well you can't make them do it.

JG: You may not have been involved at this level because I know probably in general, you know, that was the case but, like from the background of someone at the integrated schools, say at the black schools, junior high age who have had their whole education experience has been in a separate but unequal environment...and again you may not know the answer to this but, I'm wondering about how they assimilated into a program where maybe they had never seen a test tube before and now, you know, how big was the learning curve if you even knew of such thing, for the black students coming into it.

RA: Well I don't know but, there weren't many black students, very few black students took chemistry and physics and that type of thing.

JG: Okay.

RA: They had some very intelligent students there at Temple High. I can't remember the names of these two in particular, but that went onto college and were very successful in college and just went out in the world and blew things away, but you'd have to talk to some of the people over there to know their...I just can not think but this one girl was just amazing. I wish I could remember her name.

JG: Well all right unless you have anything else that is about all I had.

RA: No, I don't guess.

JG: Well Mr. Albrecht I thank you very much.

RA: Well you bet, you bet.

END OF INTERVIEW