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Rena Xiao: 00:00:00 Hi.
Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:00:03 [inaudible 00:00:03].
Rena Xiao: 00:00:07 Oh, is this Dr. Moore?
Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:00:16 [inaudible 00:00:17].
Rena Xiao: 00:00:20 Yeah. Yeah. I'm really glad you decided to be a part of this and I'm really excited to get to interview you as well, and also turn that into an oral history kind of podcast thing as well.
Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:00:35 [inaudible 00:00:35].
Rena Xiao: 00:00:42 Oh, yeah. Yeah. Of course. The finalized product or the whole interview?
Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:00:52 [inaudible 00:00:50].
Rena Xiao: 00:00:52 Yeah, yeah. Once we edit it and everything we do that, I think that it will either be put online, probably most likely yes, as well as there will be a presentation event as well, which I'm sure you're welcome to come down to. But yes, we'll get you a final copy of ... Yeah. That's eventually in the distance but that's going to be in a little while, but once we finish editing everything, I'll make sure you get a copy. It will also you'll also be accessible online too.
Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:01:21 [inaudible 00:01:21].
Rena Xiao: 00:01:35 Okay cool. A little about myself, I'm Rena, I'm a rising junior in college. I'm actually from Beijing. I'm from New York, but I live in Beijing. And I am an international studies and geography major, with a minor in WGSS.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:01:44 [inaudible 00:01:45].

Rena Xiao: 00:01:45 WGSS, women gender sexuality studies.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:01:48 Okay.

Rena Xiao: 00:01:49 Okay. Just to ... I would love it if you could introduce yourself in sentence form. For example like, "My name is blah blah blah," and if you could cover your--the year you graduated and your major as well.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:02:05 Yeah, okay. Well, my name is Jesse N. Moore, Dr. Jesse N. Moore. And I attended University of Richmond starting in August of 1977, graduated in May 1981, got a bachelor, BS degree in management from the E. Claiborne Robins School of Business.

Rena Xiao: 00:02:31 Okay, that was great. Thank you. Yeah. So we're gonna--I'm just going to dive right into the interview if that's all right with you.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:02:37 Okay.

Rena Xiao: 00:02:38 Yeah, awesome. So would you like to tell us a little, how you ended up at the University of Richmond?

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:02:46 [Moore laughs] It's, it's not a really long long story. It's just that you know, I was not so academically inclined. I mean, I was always a good student. I was an honors student in high school, but you know, school wasn't really my focus. I think the honors ... I worked hard in my classes and did well, what needed to be done. So I got really good grades in school, but I was more interested in sports. So I participated in several sports in high school. Track and field, I threw the shot put and discus. I was a big kid.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:03:22 And also, I played football for a couple years my junior and senior years. And so turns out I was fairly decent at playing football and I got recruited by University of Richmond. I'll never forget the gentleman that led that effort, that was Phil Elmassian, and he was an assistant coach under Coach Jim Tait at the time. So I got recruited by University of Richmond, offered a full athletic scholarship to play football. Got recruited by a few other schools as well.
Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:03:55 Visited Richmond, really liked the campus. I don't know that anyone could ever set foot on campus and, and not fall in love with the place. [Moore laughs] Obviously, it was a much more beautiful campus than any other school I had visited during this time-frame. And I felt I was a better fit in terms of football at Richmond there. I thought academically it was a good fit. And...It was fairly close to home, I wanted to stay close to home. I was born and raised in Newport News, Virginia, which is, that'd be approximately 90 miles from the school. And so it was a good fit and so I accepted the scholarship offer and that's just pretty much how I wound up at the University of Richmond, to make it a long story short.

Rena Xiao: 00:04:50 Oh, okay. And did you, did you live on campus once you got here?

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:04:55 Yeah, I think then all the athletes, all the, most of the... I was not aware of any football players that didn't live on campus. And so, Yeah, I lived on campus the entire four years that I was there. I don't remember all the residences, I just remember Thomas Hall being one that I was in for two or three of the four...three or--yeah, two or three of the four years I was there. I had roommates for a couple of those years in Thomas Hall. And then had a single in Thomas Hall as well, so. Yeah, so I lived on campus the entire time I was there, so. Yeah.

Rena Xiao: 00:05:35 And you mentioned football, so was most of your circle football players or did that gradually expand to get to know some of the other students on campus?

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:05:46 Yeah, that was really kind of the one of the unique aspects I found being at Richmond at the time at least, for me at least, and in my perception for most of the guys that played sports. I mean, we were on a somewhat different schedule to start with, you know. We'd come in earlier in August than the other students would, you know. I think schools actually would start in September back then, but we would come in in August to start practice for the upcoming season.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:06:28 And so you know my circle was pretty much, you know, consisted of the athletes, and primarily the football players and some of the basketball players. Other athletes on campus and... Really didn't mix much with the other students on campus. I remember going to fraternity parties and that sort of thing, but it just seems, it seemed to be, you know, that that's the way things were there, you know. All the jocks, so to speak, hung out together. And didn't hang out too much with what we might have called the "regular students."
mean, I knew the students that were in my hall, you know. Some of them that were in the same residence hall, you know, near me and that sort of thing, but in terms of really building close friendships and that sort of thing, it didn't happen outside of the circle of folks that played sports.

Rena Xiao: 00:07:38 And when you say like the circle of friends who play sports, mostly, were you close with mostly, for example, the fellow Black athletes, student athletes on campus or was it--were you just close with all of the football team, including the white players as well? Or the circle like, was it mostly just like ... I know a lot of people we've interviewed in the past have talked about like, "Oh, there was like that athlete divide," but there was also kind of like a, like within the athlete groups, a divide between certain teams as well as members from different races as well. So...

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:08:12 Yeah, I think you know, as far as the teams, I think the teams generally hung together, you know, because again, we tended to be on the same schedule. I mean, you would see in the dining facilities, you know, when people went to eat dinner, lunch, the various meals, you know, the folks who were on the basketball team, they'd tend to sit together. The guys on the football team would tend to sit together. And you know, the men and women on the track team, same there. And so I think it was only natural that you would spend more time and feel closer to the people who were doing the same thing that you were doing, in terms of the schedule, and activities--sport activities, and practice, and working out, and that same sort of thing on the same schedule.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:09:06 And so teams, you know, team members of the various sports, you know, from my perspective and perception tended to be fairly close, and then within the football team for us, I think ... you know, I felt fairly close. I was a team guy, and I felt you know fairly close and good about all my teammates, regardless of race. But I think that within that team as well, I think the Black athletes, you know, felt a certain comradery. I mean, there were relatively few of us on campus. I remember the number ... At some point someone said they were like 35 or 37 Black students on campus, out of 3,500. So there was, you know, about a 1% population of African Americans on the entire campus. And I think it was just natural for us to gravitate towards each other.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:10:06 And then beyond that, you know, when you look at even within the team, the athletes, even within race, you know, there tended to be pockets of locations where people came from. And so there were several guys that were from the
Peninsula area, the Hampton Roads, I’m talking about Newport News, Hampton, Williamsburg area. I mean, I remember myself, and Reuben Turner, and Reggie Evans, and maybe a couple more. We all came from that Peninsula area and then there were other guys that came from around the northern Virginia area, Washington D.C. area. There were several folks. And so you know, in my perception, you know, tended to be close to the guys who were from the same area that you were from. Closer to the guys that were, you know, same race, that sort of thing. And then, you know, as the circle widens, the team and then ... I don’t know if we’d include the general student body in the circle at all, so. [Moore laughs] If that makes sense.

Rena Xiao: 00:11:29 Yeah, that does.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:11:32 Yeah.

Rena Xiao: 00:11:32 So what was your biggest adjustment then coming onto campus, comparing to your high school experience as well your experience back home?

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:11:42 Well you know, looking back on it, I think I was, you know, a fairly naïve young man, you know. I really didn’t think about issues like race and that sort of thing. I mean, I came--you know, I grew up in a predominantly Black neighborhood, but I went to an integrated high school, Homer L. Ferguson--which is closed now--in Newport News, Virginia. And...It was one of the first schools that was integrated. But in any case, you know, you know, it was an integrated school and I got along with everybody, you know. I didn’t really think about race that much. At the time, you know, there were, there were, you know, issues with regards to civil rights that we’d read about in the news, and that sort of thing, but nothing that was top of mind.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:12:40 And so...you know, when I came to Richmond, you know, I had the same sort of attitude. That you know I didn’t really think about race a whole lot and you know got along well with all the teammates. Well you gotta understand, you know, we report to the university in August and for about a month there’s nothing. There’s no students on campus except football players, you know, when we’re practicing getting ready for the season. And so we had that month to bond and then when other students came in, you know--they were other students. And so...didn’t, you know...the thing that I noticed over time, at least, is that, that...didn’t seem to form relationships with other students, you know? And I didn’t notice that the other players had relationships with other
students either. So I mean, there's almost a sort of invisible wall there, so to speak, you know?

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:13:45 And so you know, if I look back on my college experience and you know as I think about it, I mean I think if you have to say there was something that was missing, that was that thing, that getting to know of a wider circle of people, probably would have been beneficial but that wasn't part of our culture. If that makes sense at all.

Rena Xiao: 00:14:11 Yeah, it does. So in terms of the athletes, what did you--if you weren't really--didn't really get to know the other students as well, did you mostly like... Where were your channels of what would you do for fun, like for your social life? Did you tend to see other students or did you go to their events or...?

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:14:37 Well you know, it was mostly the guys that hung out together, you know. We would do things together and hang out with each other. you know. We’d go off campus, you know. One of the attractions that was mentioned during the recruiting phase and remained an attraction or an outlet for us was was the fact that we were, you know, close enough to the city of Richmond, the Virginia Commonwealth [University] campus, Virginia Union [University] campus was fairly, you know, fairly close, within driving distance, and then you had a little further down the road Virginia Union University [likely Virginia State University].

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:15:23 And so you know, it was always a good you know, [Moore laughs], field trip, so to speak, to you know kind of widen your social circle. And so in terms of social stuff, you know, it’s pretty much the guys hanging out and that sort of thing. Yeah, again, I think that was a thing that was lacking, you know. There really wasn’t a lot of, from my perspective, wasn’t a lot of opportunities to form close relationships or socialize with women or people of the opposite sex. I mean, because again, it seemed to me sort of a sort of glass wall between, you know, other students and the athletes, you know. I don't know if it was intentional, you know. They didn’t seem to understand us, and you know we were working a different schedule and we didn't spend a lot of effort to try to get to know and understand them, at least.

Rena Xiao: 00:16:35 Do you think it was both ways or do you think it was more of a...sort of like by accident, or just kinda of how things were?

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:16:44 Well you know, I think it went both ways, you know. I think a really defining moment for me, or time for me, was when I got accepted to the business school. At the time--I don't know
what the procedures are now—but at the time, if you wanted
to go to the business school you'd have to apply before your
junior year, and you know obviously they look at your
academic record up until that point, you know, to determine
whether they're going to accept you into the business school.
And so, you know, during freshman year and sophomore
year, I mean, a lot of the guys you know talked about you
know their interest in majoring in business, and I did to. And
so, and I had good grades, again, I was a Dean List student as
a freshman and sophomore, and so the issue of performing
well enough to get into the business school was never
something that I was that concerned about, you know?

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:17:48 And so I did apply, I got accepted to the business school, and
very quickly I realized that on most days I would be the only
Black person that I would see. [Moore laughs] You know?

Rena Xiao: 00:18:07 Mmm-hmm [affirmative]

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:18:07 I remember at the time in the business school it would be ...
There were three Black students in the business school
during my junior and senior year. There was myself, and my
roommate during my junior year was Ken Gilliam. He
happens to be from the same area in Virginia. He's from
Hampton. I'm from Newport News, you know, they're
adjacent cities in the southeastern part of the state. And...Ken
Gilliam, my roommate, he had gotten in the year before, so.
And then there was Norm [Thomas], who was the same year
as I was and so we were three Black students that ... The only
three Black students in the entire college of business—Well
you know, it's not a huge business school, I don't know what
the enrollment is now, but at the time it wasn't really huge,
but it's quite noticeable, you know? [Moore laughs]

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:19:07 And the culture there was quite different as well. It was all
really culture shock. And...I mean, maybe you can tell me
what it's like... I haven't been back to Richmond in many,
many years and so I don't know how the culture has changed
in that regard but, but...it was quite common for students in
the business school to wear business attire, you know? And
so to see students in business suits, I mean that was common.
I didn't dress that like, you know? I didn't dress the same.
Obviously I didn't look the same. And so [Moore laughs] I
remember feeling, you know, completely out of place all the
time when I was going to classes, and so it was quite a relief,
somewhat of a relief to actually finish and graduate and
move on.
Rena Xiao: 00:20:12 Were there any stereotypes you had to overcome as a Black student, especially as a Black student in the Robins School of Business?

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:20:20 Well, you know, I don't know. Again, I was--I think I was, you know, again, naïve in terms of the race issue. I was not real conscious of it. I was conscious of the fact that I was one of few students in the school, but you know I never thought in terms of someone discriminating against me. I never thought like that, you know. I didn't think about the professors discriminating against me or anything. But I mean, I just noticed I mean ... It was a situation that if I didn't speak to someone, nobody spoke to me. Alright? And I mean, that gets old after a while. If I didn't speak to someone, nobody really reached out to me. I mean, that was so...it was really very lonely, so...aside from ... And my roommate, he was a different year, he's taking different classes, and so, again ... I remember being in class and not really talking to any of the other students, you know. Nobody talking--making any attempts to talk to me, you know. I just kinda thought that's the way it was, you know.

Rena Xiao: 00:21:38 Did this also extend to professors or was it mostly just students as well?

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:21:44 It was professors as well, you know. I mean, they didn't--I don't remember any professors going out of their way to have a relationship with me. There was a one professor, a couple of professors I do remember that kind of stood out, you know. And again, I can't believe how naïve I was you know as I look back on it. And that's probably the thing that saved me and allowed me to persevere, and to actually finish there. I remember a professor inviting me to come spend the weekend at his summer home or something with he and his wife, and I didn't ... I mean, I thought that was a really nice gesture, right? And it turns out that what he wanted me to come and work and do landscaping for that weekend there.

Rena Xiao: 00:23:02 Oh wow.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:23:02 So that's what I did. And I got paid for it. But you know, it wasn't necessarily you know, an act of friendship. He was hiring me, basically, [Moore laughs] and I didn't realize it. But I got paid for it. Nice house. You know. I was in decent, pretty good shape so it wasn't that taxing.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:23:22 And then, the other professor, one other professor I remember ... And we didn't have a real close relationship. I'm talking about a professor in the business school. And I don't
remember, again, I don’t remember his name, you know, but I was in ROTC. A lot of, several of the guys that were on the team were in ROTC, Reserve Officer Training Corps, and you know sometimes we’d, you know ... I think once a month or so we’d have to wear uniforms all day. And I was sitting in class one day in uniform, in a finance class, and the professor came over to me and he said to me, "I remember I used to do the same thing that you’re doing." And he explained that he had, you know, he’d been in the military, that he used to be an Army officer, he used to jump out of planes and that sort of stuff. I mean, it was a brief conversation. It was like a two or three minute conversation, and that really you know kind of stuck out to me. I never forgot about it. And it’s something that you know, that ultimately kind of led to me doing what I’m doing now.

Rena Xiao: 00:24:35 You spoke a little about your naiveté or naiveness in terms of helping you kind of like get through college, and... Do you remember ever, if there was a time when you finally realized or when there was time when you kind of were more aware of the situation, or the kind of the culture, campus culture, culture on campus, or when you realized kind of like maybe kind of underlying race factors or other factors that may have been present in your situation in your time--in your college career?

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:25:09 Well, you know, I think that the realization of you know the experience, the understanding of the experience that I’d gone through at Richmond really came to me more so afterwards, you know? In my experience, I mean, that was my college experience. You know, as an undergraduate, you know, I didn’t know or think that it could be different at the time. I wasn’t really happy about it, didn’t feel good or feel right, you know, felt kinda being ... Aside from the, you know, being an athlete and feeling, you know, a part of the team and all that, never really felt part of the general student body or that sort of thing.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:26:08 And so I just really accepted it as in this is my college experience and understanding, you know, what I had gone through and the environment that I had been in and the fact that, you know, nobody ever reached out to me or seemed to try to develop relationships with me or whatever. There seemed to be this invisible wall. I mean, understand—that really came to me as I, you know, got older and moved on and worked in other environments, you know? That there was something off kilter about it, so, you know. If that makes sense.
Rena Xiao: 00:26:53 Oh, it does, yeah.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:26:54 I mean, it was, you know, it was my reality, it was what I had to deal with, it didn't feel good. I didn't know if it would be...different somewhere else, if I would feel different somewhere else. I suspected that it--I would. There was a time when I thought about transferring, you know? It just didn't... cause, I mean, Richmond just didn't feel good socially to me, you know? If that makes sense. And I thought about transferring, and as I thought about transferring I wondered would it be different somewhere else.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:27:30 And ultimately, you know, I've come to believe that, that the Richmond experience was really ultimately helpful for me, professionally speaking, and in other ways, you know. I think it kind of made me tough, so to speak. You know, that I'm able to deal with being the only or one of few Black people in an environment, you know, because after leaving Richmond, I mean, that was the case. I mean, in most professional environments I've worked, you know, I was the only Black person or one of very few, you know. When I decided to go on to graduate school, and in my Master's program I was the only Black student in my Master's program. The only Black student in the Ph.D program. And I was completely comfortable with it, you know?

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:28:42 Particularly in the Ph.D program, you know, I had friends that started Ph.D program in other--from other schools. They had done their undergraduate degrees at HBCUs. And I remember they used to really clown me or make fun of me because I went to Richmond, but the interesting thing about it was ... There were four of us actually that started Ph.D programs at the same time. We weren't all in marketing. I was the only one in marketing. The other three were in finance. And all of them eventually quit. I was the only one that stuck it out. So...I think having the Richmond experience helped in that regard, you know? Cause, you know, when you get into Ph.D programs and particularly as you get, as you move towards the completion of it, you know, doing your--writing your dissertation and that sort of thing, it can get lonely, you know? And you gotta be able to deal with that. [Moore laughs]

Rena Xiao: 00:30:01 And so you specifically felt that the--your undergrad experience helped prepare you for kind of the challenges later on in your academic career?

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:30:13 Yeah, I think it helped prepare me for the challenges later on in an academic career. I think it helped prepare me, you
know, for challenges in other professional environments. You know, I've done a lot of things professionally. I mean, when I finished Richmond, I--as I said, I was in ROTC and so when I finished Richmond, I went on active duty in the Army for seven years. And so I think that the military was probably the most, by far the most diverse environment that I've ever been in. And beyond the military, I've worked in several corporate settings and in all those corporate settings I was either the only Black person or one of very few. So I think the Richmond experience helped in that regard, you know so...as well.

Rena Xiao: 00:31:14 Also, before ... Sorry. Before we move on to some of the other questions, would you mind elaborating a little about that story on how that professor asked you down to his summer home? I would just like the details or like what like, what was the--how did it happen or--

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:31:38 Well, it didn't come across in an insulting way. You know, I just remember, you know, that ... Then it's been a long time ago. I just remember that...I was in his class and he came up to me after class one day and he said, you know, he and his wife were going to their summer place. I forget exactly where it was, you know. And he wanted me to come along with him. And I'm thinking, "Well, this is nice." You know? And so you know, I don't remember exactly what I said. I just thought it was a social kind of thing. Maybe this guy's trying to just get to know me, you know, as professors might get to know their students or whatever.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:32:31 And so I went--I remember talking to my roommate about it. My roommate, he's also, he's Black, and I said from the same area as I was from. He told me well the guy had done the same thing with him the year before. [Moore laughs] And that's when I discovered that's what he was wanting me to come out and help him, help him clear, do landscaping on his place. And so. Which is fine. [Moore laughs] It's okay. He wasn't just trying to get to know me, he was trying to hire me basically. Which was a little disappointing, but you know, I guess the money made up for that, so.

Rena Xiao: 00:33:21 What was your relationship with faculty like? Did you have a favorite professor or were they kind of all more distant? Was there any ... Not just in the B school, but all across and all the classes you've taken.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:33:38 Well, you know, I think, yeah ... I did really well in my sophomore--in my freshman and sophomore years. As I said, I was a Dean's List student, so getting into the business
school wasn't, wasn't an issue. I don't remember really developing any close relationships with any faculty members in those two years. I mean, I mean, they were nice enough. I went to class, I did what students were supposed to do. Spoke to professors when, you know, when necessary, you know. They didn't, you know, seek me out. I didn't seek them out.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:34:26 Otherwise ... So I don't, I don't remember really having a favorite professor. I think, you know, I had, you know, a favorite subject matter. I remember having a history class, I just thought ... And again, I don't remember any of their names, and so I guess that might be enough to tell you there weren't any real close bonds or anything for them. But... Maybe favorite subject matter. Not a favorite professor. I didn't really form any kind of relationships to have a favorite professor. Maybe some of the guys did, but I didn't.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:35:05 And then in the business school, it all seemed extremely distant, you know. It just seemed really cold and sterile. Like I said, the way the students, the way the business students dressed was different from the regular student body, in my perception. They seemed to be more formal. And... students and the faculty, you know, all the faculty always in formal business attire. Students as well, you know. It was quite common, I said. And so it all seemed very cold and distant. Beyond the weekend at this professor's house and beyond the occasion where the one professor talked about his military experience, you know, I don't remember any real ... Developing any or having any real conversations with them outside of what, you know, outside of school activity, you know, or what was going on in a class.

Rena Xiao: 00:36:14 Outside of your academic career and also outside of your football experience as well, what were some of your extracurriculars you did on campus? Like for student organizations or clubs you helped form or be part of.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:36:31 Oh, yeah. yeah. I think when of you have talked to Stan Jones here recently. Stan is my fraternity brother. And so that's probably one of the most outstanding accomplishments that I think that I participated in, is that myself and six other young men were--helped to bring a predominantly Black fraternity to campus. And that was Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity. That was during my senior year. We pledged, the seven of us pledged the fraternity. The fraternity brothers from VCU and Virginia Union, Virginia State University, they kind of pledged us. It was a different pledge experience then. [Moore laughs] Typical than the normal for the fraternity cause we'd often
go to their campuses for those activities, but we did bring that fraternity.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:37:51 And I believe that fraternity is still on campus. Mu Omicron chapter of Phi Beta Sigma fraternity. Stan Jones is a member. Mike London, Clayton White, Tim Spriggs, myself. Who else? A couple other people. Yeah. And so...That’s what we did our senior year, my senior year. And in terms of extracurricular, just participating in extracurricular sports, you know. During the football all season, playing intramural basketball, that sort of stuff. That’s pretty much it.

Rena Xiao: 00:38:43 I also saw in the yearbooks you were a part of the Student Organization for Black Awareness?

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:38:49 Yeah, yeah, I mean I think that--

Rena Xiao: 00:38:51 SOBA--

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:38:52 Yeah, in my experience ... I probably should have looked at the yearbook [Moore laughs] before the interview. I still got them all. I got all four. But I think that Black students at the time were kinda members of that organization by the default, really, you know. [Moore laughs] I don’t remember us doing a whole lot as an organization. You know...Maybe we had a couple meetings or maybe I attended a couple meetings but I just don’t remember being very active in the organization except that, you know, you’re one of the few Black students here, and so you’re a member of it, you know? [Moore laughs]

Rena Xiao: 00:39:42 Also--

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:39:42 So what-

Rena Xiao: 00:39:43 Sorry.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:39:44 What are the demographics there like now? I’m aware that it’s just changed substantially but I haven’t spent a lot of time on campus.

Rena Xiao: 00:40:00 So I am Asian-American and I know there’s a lot of Chinese international students. I’m also technically an international student too just because I live abroad in Beijing. But there are a lot of Chinese international students. A fair amount of other international students. There is a fair amount of Black students, not just athletes but also students here for ... I think Boatwright Scholars, I think they are here for Bonner Scholars, president scholars. In terms of general
demographics, the university officially released that 30% of the school identifies as a person of color. There’s definitely--

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:40:40 3%? You said 3%?
Rena Xiao: 00:40:42 30%.
Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:40:43 30%, okay.
Rena Xiao: 00:40:44 Yeah. From what I’ve heard from past alumni even within the last 10 years, the school has changed a--big in terms of the campus culture as well as student population and demographics as well. So definitely heading in the right direction. There have--are still kind of questions and kind of more problems in terms of inclusion and equity, but diversity in general is increasing year by year.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:41:14 Mm-hmm. Okay.
Rena Xiao: 00:41:15 Yeah. When was the last time you were on campus?
Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:41:20 The last time I was on campus ... I think I visited ... They had a ceremony at one of the football games for Jim Tait who was retiring, I believe. And...I can't remember exactly what year it was. It must have been...back in 2004, 2005, or so. And that was just to drive through campus. I mean, I didn't really spend any time. Just went to take a look at it, really. Didn’t really engage with anyone. You know, because the football game was downtown so... Or at city stadium ... University of Richmond Stadium now, I guess they call it.

Rena Xiao: 00:42:13 Oh, we actually have a football stadium on campus.
Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:42:17 I know you’ve got a stadium on campus now, but I haven’t...that was before that stadium had been built, so. It was the last time I’d been on campus.
Rena Xiao: 00:42:31 I had some questions on how you started Phi Beta Sigma, is that correct?
Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:42:37 Yeah. Phi Beta Sigma, yeah.
Rena Xiao: 00:42:39 It was colonized on 1980. Could you talk a little bit about the process of bringing that on campus and kind of what the reaction was from the students as well as the administration?
Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:42:52 Well, we had a ... One of the guys on the team, James Reed, somehow or another... He had pledged the fraternity, and I don’t know how or when he had pledged the fraternity. And
he approached, you know, several guys about you know bringing a chapter to campus. And so, but James ... We call him Reed, James Reed. He--I think he dealt with the Interfraternity Council and the university administration and that sort of thing. My perception was that, you know, that all parties were in favor of it. Didn't really feel any opposition. Didn't hear any opposition to it at all. You know, there were only seven of us. And so James...he kind of got the ball rolling, James Reed, and you know he approached guys--because it's mostly guys on the team were Black players. Black players, or Black students, most of them were on the football team. [Moore laughs] There were a few who weren't, a very few, who weren't athletes of some sort.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:44:19 But he approached us and asked, you know, were we interested in joining. And I, you know, I was aware of Black fraternities at other schools, you know...but didn't know a whole hell of a lot about it, you know? But I just thought it was a good idea, you know. If there was something that I could leave as a legacy or be a part of as a legacy to help bring some change to the campus, then I was all for being a part of that. And so, yeah, I joined that group that, pledged that year, to bring the fraternity to campus in 1980. Yeah.

Rena Xiao: 00:45:07 What were some of the events you would hold and what was kind of like the effect of this Black fraternity on Black student life at U of R?

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:45:18 Well, I don't think we had a real big impact that I saw because, you know, shortly after we brought the fraternity on campus...then I graduated. So I think the impact, as I thought it would be, the impact probably, if there was an impact, it came later. I think the thing that it did, or that I noticed at the time, was that it probably stimulated other people to think about doing the same sort of thing. And there were guys that pledged other Black fraternities, but you know they didn't bring the chapter to campus. And so I think that if--any impact that it had, it you know encouraged a few of the other guys to reach out to organizations like that, similar kinds of organizations.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:46:22 Again, if, you know, in the timeframe, very limited timeframe that I was there after we had brought the thing to campus, we didn’t really do any large scale events, you know. There couldn’t have been any large ... I think it’s probably hard to imagine for you probably, but again, in terms of Black students at least and students of color, you know, you’re talking about students that you say that the percentage is 30% now ... I mean, back then it's pretty much Black and
white. You know, I didn’t see Asian students at all. And it’s pretty much Black and white, and...as I recall it. And this 1% of us were Black, you know. 35 out of 3,500. So...[Moore laughs] so there’s not much big that you can do with that small of a group, you know? Socially, at least.

Rena Xiao: 00:47:31 Did you ever participate in Greek life as in the white fraternities? Or not officially white fraternities, but the other frats on campus? Did you ever participate in their events?

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:47:45 Well yeah, I mean, they always had good parties. [Moore laughs] And so I used to go to their parties, basically, you know. They always...had, you know, the fraternity row there. And if you were looking for a party or a place to go and have a beer, you could always find it on fraternity row. So that was pretty much it. But if I were to go to those kinds of things or participate in those kinds of things, you know, it was generally with other players, you know. We’d go as a group, have a few beers, leave. That sort of thing.

Rena Xiao: 00:48:33 And you said most of your off-campus experiences were at VCU, is that correct?

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:48:39 VCU, Virginia State. And...I’m just saying at Virginia State University in Petersburg and at VCU downtown. Yeah.

Rena Xiao: 00:48:54 Were there any systems put into place to meet with VCU students or visit off-campus areas? Did you...Was there...Like was it one person who had a relationship or did you just kind of on the weekends head over to their campuses?

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:49:13 Well that sort of thing became more available after the...we pledged the fraternity because we became part of a larger group, because they had chapters on all of the campuses. The chapters of my fraternity at Virginia State, and they had chapters at VCU, and at Virginia Union downtown as well. But any connections that, that we had with those other places were generally you know, through networking. You know, that had a friend that you know, knew people or had you know had friends or relatives there, and you go hang out with them, you know, kind of thing.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:50:00 And so for example, my freshman year, I roomed with--one of my roommates was Reuben Turner. And he’s from Hampton, Virginia, as well. And Reuben’s girlfriend--and his wife, his current wife, Patrice--Patrice went to Virginia State University. And so, you know, I’d go visit, go to Virginia State with him you know, just to hang out sometimes and meet people that way. And so...And then after ... The same sort of
thing you know, with down at Virginia Commonwealth. You had a friend that knew somebody down there and you go down there, sort of thing. And when I went down there, you know, I’d run into people that I went to high school with, so. A lot of people that I went to high school with, that sort of thing. But it wasn’t convenient, you know, it wasn’t something that you could do every day at the time. I didn’t have a car until my junior year. So. That’s kind of how it worked.

Rena Xiao: 00:51:13 Could you describe the biggest differences, obviously, between the UR campus life and Virginia Union and VCU?

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:51:25 Well, the biggest difference was obviously the demographic of the student body, you know. And so...first of all, Virginia, you know Virginia State in Petersburg is a, you know, HBCU. So most--it’s predominantly Black students by far there, you know. Always felt real comfortable, you know, at Virginia State, you know. So and then Virginia--VCU and Union, they were in the middle of downtown Richmond, much more urban, you know. In the middle of the city. Didn’t really feel like a college campus at all, you know. Those didn’t, those two didn’t, to me at least.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:52:17 And so demographically diverse, you know, because it was in the middle of downtown. I mean, when you’re in those environments, VCU in particular, and you run into, meet people, you know, could be a student, could be just a resident of the city or someone who lives down there, you know. They’re all intermingled. They were at the time. So...that was the difference. I mean, Richmond was distinctly a college campus. You know I always tell people, and I tell people now, you know, I remember the campus being very beautiful. And...But it’s not the kind of place that you could pass through. You’d have to be going there to see it.

Rena Xiao: 00:53:07 Do you still keep in touch with your friends from UR or athletes, your fellow student athletes?

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:53:19 I think we’re online, we’re in touch online. You know, we all had some different paths after graduating. When I...But we’re in touch online. I feel that I could reach out and touch those guys very easily, you know I see them on social media and that sort of stuff now. I haven’t returned to any of the reunions and that sort of thing, you know. I just don’t feel ... For me at least, I don’t feel that big of a connection to Richmond that I wanted to hang out there at the reunions and that sort of thing, so.
And besides that, like I said, I think I’ve had a really full life since, you know. I went on active duty in the military shortly after leaving Richmond, went immediately ... My first duty assignment was in Germany. And so...almost...Leaving UR almost directly spent three years in Germany. And then leaving Germany I went out to Arizona so almost, almost getting real close to being on the West Coast. And...yeah, so. It’s kind of some distance between myself and the place.

One thing I noticed doing research was that when I was looking at the yearbooks for when you were on campus was that your photo only appeared in your senior year yearbooks. Was there a particular reason why you chose to-- might have omit your photos in the previous years or was that just kind of through coincidence or situations?

Well, I don't think it was coincidence. It was just that, you know... I was saying that I made an effort to ... My photo is in my senior yearbook? My senior yearbook? I didn't really realize that ... I didn't think it was in any of them.

It was only in the senior year.

Okay, so I must have made an effort to go and take the photo then. I just didn't really bother to take the photo in the other years, you know. And so...Probably that, you know, I was getting ready to graduate and I wanted to have a yearbook with my photo in it. Probably the reason I did it the last year. But again, I really didn't feel that sort of, you know ... I didn't feel that connected to the place other than playing sports there, playing football there. I mean, that was primary connection, the sport, playing football there. I was really into the football. [Moore laughs]

What is something that you wish you had known before coming to campus and what surprises you most about campus today?

Well, like I said, I haven't been there for a while. But...You mean...what...something that I wish I'd known before I enrolled there?

Mm-hmm [affirmative]--

Well, you know, like I said, I was really kind of naïve. And I remember being recruited to Richmond. And in my sophomore year and my junior year and my senior year, when I was a part of the recruiting process, recruiting other guys, I always thought it was kind of amusingly comical. But I
didn’t realize it at the time, that when I was being recruited as a freshman ... You know, when they bring recruits onto campus, you know they--back then, you’d interact with the coaches for part of the day and then in the evenings they’d link you up with one of the current players and you’d go out and do social stuff with that player or hang out with other players, right?.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:57:52 And so when I was recruited there, we went through that same process, and so when I got linked up with the guys that I was hanging out with for the night or two that I was there, we immediately went downtown. [Moore laughs] We really didn’t spend any time on the campus, right? So I really got--didn’t get a real good sense of what student life was actually like there, until I was there. [Moore laughs] And then you know--but interesting enough ... It was sort of, the same sort of thing when I was a part of the recruiting process there, you know. That, you know, you have this recruit here and you want to show them a good time, and so you gotta, you gotta take them somewhere else, you know, where he might feel more comfortable, you know?

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:58:49 And that’s kind of what happened with me. So I wish I’d had really known or thought more about, you know, what the campus was gonna be like and what it was gonna be like to be a student there at University of Richmond and so on. But maybe it didn’t matter. I mean, this was like the late ’70s. And I was just happy to get an education, to get an education that was a great school. And so I think, you know, any situation, you can look back on it and if you choose to, you can choose to look at it negatively or you can choose to look at it for the positive things that it has done for you. And I tend to look at it for the positive things that it has done for me.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 00:59:47 And so, in terms of the campus now, you know, I see on social media, the things that I read, you know, and from what I see from the folks, you know, fellow alumni who are there, guys who were part of the team and their families who had spent more time at Richmond, that you know, they’re really pleased and happy with some of the changes in terms of diversity. From what I can read about some of the opportunities for diverse students at Richmond, I’m really proud of it. I say sometimes that I could not imagine or think that it would ever be possible for Richmond to have a Black president. And it’s happened. So there must be some good things and changes in attitudes there. More inclusion there. That sort of thing.
And so, I’m really proud of my university. I think that Richmond has gone further than a lot of schools have, and progressed further than a lot of schools have, from what I can see. I think that my current institution, where I am now, it could probably draw a few lessons from some of the things that have occurred there at Richmond. But there are differences, you know. I’m working at a public university now, and Richmond’s a private school. There’s a difference in resources and all that sort of stuff, so.

Is there any--

I feel like, I feel I’m rambling here, am I rambling or?

No, no. It’s perfect. I just can’t say anything because I can’t interrupt you or make any noise in the recording.

Right, I understand.

Yeah, what you’ve said is really good.

Okay.

Is there anything else you would like me to know? Any specific stories or experiences you would like to add? Anything that pops into your head?

Well, I think that this project ... I think that some of my classmates are surprised that I’m participating.

Really?

Cause--Well, yeah. They're surprised because, you know, I've been one that hasn’t... I haven't been back to a lot of reunions and homecoming games. I think several of the people that were part of the group that I used to hang out make it a practice to go to the homecoming games. And my roommates tend to go back to homecoming games and that sort of thing. And I haven't been back to homecoming games and that sort of thing. So, you know, I think that they may be surprised that I’m doing this sort of thing, but I’m doing it because I think that the project is great. I think that it’s the same sort of thing that other universities could learn from, you know. I think that perhaps there’s, there may be something similar going on in my current institution, I don’t know, but if there is, I think it’s great. And if not, then certainly something that could be beneficial, at least to give people a chance to tell their story, you know, and feel like they are a part of the history of the place, you know.
Dr. Jesse Moore: 01:03:49 And as I sit and talk to you ... I think about, I think I’ve told you that I haven’t been back. I mean, there are a couple of reasons I haven’t been back. Do you want to hear about it?

Rena Xiao: 01:04:05 Yeah, I’d love to.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 01:04:08 Okay, well, the main thing ... Like I said, you know, I always already done well academically. I was a pretty decent student. I think I just barely scraped by in terms of the business ... It was super competitive--the business school--from what I could tell was super competitive. And I managed to graduate, let's put it that way. But as I told you, I was really into the football thing. And so...And in fact, you know, I had aspirations, thought maybe I was good enough to play professional football. You know, and so...But that didn’t work out.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 01:04:53 But in any case, I think the thing that, that kind of ... You know...Some things that as I think about Richmond that kind of have taken me ... Have kind of made me feel less close to the place...As I've gotten older and as I've come to understand the business of college football, so to speak, I look back on our experience at Richmond, and I realize that I feel like the guys that I play with were taken advantage of, to some degree, you know?

Rena Xiao: 01:05:40 Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Dr. Jesse Moore: 01:05:42 I went to Richmond at a time when we were playing division one college football. And I mean, that's the thing that attracted me to Richmond, it was a division one college football program. I think my freshman or sophomore year that the--our football scheduled was ranked within the top 10 toughest schedules in the nation, right? And so, you know, that kind of competition and being in that echelon was attractive to me. And...as I realize, I think the year or two after I left, Richmond dropped down to what they now call the football championship subdivision, which back in my time would have been called division one AA. It's a lower tier competitive level, not, you know, the top level.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 01:06:49 But the schedules that we played when I was there ... I was just a competitor and I think the guys that I played, with they were competitors. We were just playing football, trying to do our best, but there is no .. The schedule that we had, we should never have played the kind of schedules we played. They were too tough. And we didn't have, I didn't have a winning season, we didn't have a winning season the entire time I was there, and indeed my junior year we did not win a
game. We went zero and 11, which resulted in head coach being fired. This is the coaching staff that recruited me.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 01:07:39 And so they brought in a new coaching staff there at the time and Dal Shealy was the new coaching staff. He was a very devout Christian and he brought those ideas to coaching. And, you know, I felt that they didn’t, I felt that his coaching staff did not care for me at all. Even though some might argue I was one of the better, perhaps even more well-known players on the team, you know, they didn’t care too much for me. They didn’t really give too much assistance in the way of helping me to pursue my aspirations to play professional football.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 01:08:25 And so there’s two things. I mean, we shouldn’t have played the kind of schedule that we played. You know, I think we got taken advantage of there. And then secondly, when they brought in a new coaching staff, we just kind of got swept away. And I remember seeing, the year after I graduated, I remember seeing ... I have thought about this interview. I wasn’t going to talk about this but I’m talking about it because of my--it’s an important component of my relationship to the University of Richmond. I can’t leave it out, cause it kind of defines my relationship to the school.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 01:09:17 So...But in any case, they brought in a new coaching staff my senior year. They didn’t really you know, they really didn’t care for myself or any of the players that they didn’t recruit, from what I could tell. And then once my playing days were over, they were pretty much done. With me. And so I graduated, they were...And I noticed I was ... Moved back home to Newport News. And I noticed that the junior varsity football team was, had a game in Newport News to play against the apprentice school. Newport News Shipbuilding, they have an apprentice school there. They have a school there. A junior college, basically, and they have a team.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 01:10:10 And so our University of Richmond junior varsity team was down in town to play the apprentice school. And I made sure to go to the game and I ran into my old position coach. Jim Marshall’s his name. But in any case ... And, you know, I was just happy to see the guys, I was happy to see him, and he insulted me. He said something to the nature, you know, that I was one of the reasons that his taxes were so high, or something of that nature. Insinuating that he was somehow, that I was somehow on public assistance or something like that. And never forgot. And then I went...
Dr. Jesse Moore: 01:11:07 And then there was...After I came back from Germany, it was... I did three years in Germany, came back in '85 or so. I think I went to campus and I went by the old football offices, right? And I remember seeing they had a wall with all-American athletes or football players. Guys who had earned all-American honors while playing football there. And they had everybody's photo except mine. I don't know why it wasn't... I've just been turned off to going back to the school since then, really. So. Yeah. That hurt.

Rena Xiao: 01:12:00 Do you think there was a particular reason for this negative relationship between you and the coaches?

Dr. Jesse Moore: 01:12:08 The only thing I can think of is that I was who I was. Black player. I was a first generation college student, you know. And so, I mean, that's the only thing I can think of. So. I don't know. I don't know what it would be. I mean. That's...It just hurt. It didn't feel good, you know? These coaches were important. Coaches are like father figures to me, you know, cause I was so really into the football thing that...Yeah.

Rena Xiao: 01:12:51 Thank you for sharing. If there's not anything else you would like to add to that story, I'm gonna probably going to end with a question. What advice would you give to incoming Black students, Black student athletes? There's a lot of students of color in general. And anything else you would like to add.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 01:13:22 Okay, well, well, you know. After this interview, you know, it's likely ... I may find time to [Moore laughs] come back and visit Richmond there. So I'm working on an academic calendar as well, so it's just not often convenient. Excuse me. But in any case, I think that the advice ... From everything I read, can see, and hear, it sounds like University of Richmond is serious about the notions of diversity and inclusion. Not only just serious about it and talking about it and promoting it, but they're putting resources behind it, scholarship opportunities, and those sorts of things. And I think that's great. And I'm really proud of the university in that regard and I will always speak highly of the university in that regard. So...I've been to a lot of places, I've had opportunity to spend time on several other college campuses, getting these degrees and teaching and so on. And so from what I can tell, Richmond is leading the pack in that regard, with regards to diversity, and inclusion at least from where I sit.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 01:14:50 And so what I would tell, you know, Black students, diverse students who come to Richmond, is to get involved, you know, and to widen your circle and that sort of thing, you
know. I didn't know enough to do it, didn't have anybody to encourage, to encourage me to do it, you know. It sounds like you've got a lot of people from a lot of different places there now. Take advantage of those opportunities to meet and get to know people who are different from yourself, who are from different parts of the world, different parts of the country, who may have different family backgrounds and have different interests and that sort of thing. Get involved in the organizations that are available to you, whether they be student organizations, athletic organizations. That's the advice that I would give to students who are coming in.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 01:15:58

Take advantage of the resources there. Richmond has a, has a great reputation. You know, it's neat to say that I'm a graduate of Richmond because most people I've shared that with have seemed to be favorably impressed by that, so... [Moore laughs] Take advantage of the resources, get involved, get to know people, stay involved. Get involved with the wider, you know, city, the location there outside of the university campus. You know, those sorts of things. That's the advice that I would give to students. There's just so much more nowadays, I think that...Maybe some of this stuff was available then, but there's so much the students can get involved in. Different kinds of academic organizations, interest organizations. On campus, organizations that are national or even international.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 01:17:10

And just take advantage of the opportunity, the learning experience, you know. This is, this is really what college is all about. It's more than just going to classes and getting grades. It's about everything that you do there. It's about meeting people, whether they be in the rooms, in the same dorms, or if you live off-campus, people in the community. And so, enjoy and take advantage of all those opportunities.

Rena Xiao: 01:17:42

Okay. Thank you. Yeah. I think that puts...draws our interview to an end. I don't know in terms of tech-wise I think we're going to end it. Eden, who is on tech today, she says, "Hi." She is going to end our interview on our end and I think on your end I think you're good to go too.

Dr. Jesse Moore: 01:18:09

Okay.

Rena Xiao: 01:18:10

Yeah. Thank you for your time, for talking to me as well as being a part of this project. I really appreciate it. It's been really interesting hearing your story and also hearing what campus was like back then as well. How much it's changed. Yeah.