

**The Shirley Chisholm Project**  
**Brooklyn Women's Activism 1945 to the Present**  
**Archives and Special Collections, Brooklyn College,**  
**City University of New York**  
**Brooklyn, NY**

**MARION HUMPHREY**  
**Interviewed by BARBARA WINSLOW**

**April 6, 2010**  
**The Justice Building, Little Rock, Arkansas**

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The Shirley Chisholm Project of Brooklyn Women's Activism 1945 to the Present  
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### **About the Project**

The Shirley Chisholm Project of Brooklyn Women's Activism is an archive and repository of women's grassroots social activism in Brooklyn since 1945 and ongoing in the present. Named in the spirit of Chisholm's legacy as a path breaking community and political activist, the archive follows the many paths she pioneered, by including materials representing the wide range of women's grassroots activism throughout the borough of Brooklyn. The full archive consists of oral history interviews (conducted by the staff of the project), as well as documents, newsletters, personal letters and various other materials, from people who knew or worked with Chisholm. All materials collected by the SCPBWA are housed in the Archives and Special Collections of the Brooklyn College library. If you are interested in visiting the Archives and Special Collections, please call (718) 951-5346 or visit their website at <http://library.brooklyn.cuny.edu/archives> for more information.

### **Notes on the Oral History Interviews**

The oral history collection has two components. The first includes interviews with a variety of individuals who knew and worked with Shirley Chisholm—both her friends, colleagues and political allies, as well adversaries—during her time in the New York State Senate (1964-1968), United States Congress (1969-1983) and her 1972 Presidential campaign. The second phase of the project will begin in 2012 and consist of oral history interviews with Brooklyn women activists, from 1945 to the present.

### **Researchers**

Researchers are encouraged to both read the transcript of the oral history interview and view/listen to the recording of the interview. The transcription of the interview is a near verbatim copy of the interview. The SCPBWA has decided—for the sake of clarity—to edit the transcription for the readers understanding. While the interview still contains false starts, verbal stumbles, misspeaks, and repetition, it *has been edited for readability*. It is for this reason we encourage researchers to read the transcript and view/listen to the interview when citing interviews for one's personal, scholarly or academic work. It is acceptable for researchers to utilize excerpts or quotations from this interview and in doing so we recognize that it maybe necessary to correct grammar or punctuation. It is important to note then, the nicknames and shortened names used by the narrators in reference to colleagues, friends, organizations or neighborhoods were not altered in the transcriptions produced by the SCPBWA. Therefore you may see variations of Shirley Chisholm being referred to as "Mrs. C", Wesley McDonald Holder as "Wes" or "Mac", Bedford Stuyvesant as "Bed Stuy." The variations of which names used are specific to the individual narrators.

**Abstract**

This interview focuses on the experiences of Marion Humphrey as an intern for Shirley Chisholm, while he was a student at Princeton University. He discusses his experiences working in her Washington D.C. Congressional office on constituent issues, his experiences at the Black Power Convention, in Gary, Indiana in 1972, as well as issues surrounding coalition politics.

**Interview Context**

The interview took place in the office of Judge Marion Humphrey in The Justice Building, in Little Rock Arkansas and lasted approximately 45 minutes. There maybe some background noise because the interview took place during office hours.

**Narrator**

**Marion Humphrey** was born in Pinebluff, Arkansas, where he went to public school before he was accepted to the Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire. Upon graduating from there he completed his undergraduate degree from Princeton University in Politics. Thereafter he returned home to Arkansas, where he worked for a year at the Pinebluff Commercial Newspaper, during which time he went to law school at the University of Arkansas. After taking a leave of absence from law school, Humphrey went to the Divinity School at Harvard University and eventually returned to Arkansas where he completed law school. He recently retired from his position as a Circuit Judge in Little Rock, Arkansas and is now considering running for a newly created Congressional district in Little Rock. While a student at Princeton he interned for the Joint Center for Political Studies and was assigned to work in the Congressional office of Shirley Chisholm. While an intern he worked on various constituency and citizen issues, answered correspondences and wrote responses to inquiries that people made. He also began writing speeches for Chisholm and attended conferences.

**Interviewer**

**Barbara Winslow** is the founder and Project Director of the Shirley Chisholm Project of Brooklyn Women's Activism 1945 to the Present. A historian, Professor Winslow teaches in both the School of Education and the Women's Studies Program at Brooklyn College. She is the author of *Sylvia Pankhurst: Sexual Politics and Political Activism* and coeditor of *Clio in the Classroom: A Guide for Teaching U.S. Women's History* along with Carol Berkin (Editor), Margaret S. Crocco (Editor).

**Restrictions:** None

**Format:** Video recorded, by Marwa Amer on two 40 Minute HD DVCAM tapes.

**Transcript:** Transcribed by Marwa Amer. Edited for clarity by Barbara Winslow. Pending approval from Mr. Marion Humphrey.

**Bibliography and Footnote Citation Forms:** Please include in your citation, a credit to The Shirley Chisholm Project of Brooklyn Women's Activism 1945 to the Present.

**Barbara Winslow:** I am Professor Barbara Winslow of the Brooklyn College School of Education and the Women Studies Program. I am recording the memories that New Yorkers and others have about Shirley Chisholm Brooklyn Women's Activism and its long-term significance. If you choose to take part in this project I will ask you a series of open-ended questions about your life and memories. The interview may be audiotaped, video taped or both. The interview will approximately take two hours. There are no anticipated benefits to participation and the risks associated with oral history are likewise not known to be significant. However you can withdraw from the interview at any time without prejudice prior to the execution and delivery of a deed of gift. You will also have the opportunity to make special provisions or restrictions in the deed of gift. During the interview you may request to stop the recording at any time to discuss or clarify how you wish to respond to a question or topic before proceeding. In the event you choose to withdraw during the interview any tape made of the interview will either be given to you or destroyed. Subject to the provision of the paragraph below, upon completion of the interview the tape and content of the interview belong to Barbara Winslow and the information in the interview can be used by Professor Barbara Winslow in any manner she will determine, including, but not limited to future use in presentation and publication. I agree, Barbara Winslow that I will not use or exercise any of my rights to the information in the interview prior to the signing of the deed of gift. The deed of gift will be submitted to you for your signature before the interview or if you choose after the interview. Restrictions on the use of the interview can be placed in the deed of gift by you and you will be accepted as amending Professor Winslow's right to the content of the interview. Upon signing the deed of gift a recording will be kept in the possession of

Professor Barbara Winslow in the Brooklyn College library archives. If you have questions about research projects and procedures you may contact Professor Winslow at 2403 James, 718 -951-5000 ext 6478. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions that I have outlined or that your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project you may contact professor David Balk Chair of the Committee on the Rights and Welfare of Human Subjects at Brooklyn College. You are the Honorable Marion Humphrey?

**Marion Humphrey:** Yes.

**Winslow:** Do you understand what I have just read to you?

**Humphrey:** I do.

**Winslow:** Would you tell us a little bit about yourself?

**Humphrey:** Well I am a native Arkansan; I grew up in Pinebluff, Arkansas. I went to public schools there before I was what is referred to by some people as a “ABC student,” A Better Chance student. And I went to Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire, finished there; I then went to Princeton University. After that I returned home to Arkansas and worked for a year at the Pinebluff Commercial Newspaper and I went to law school at the University of Arkansas and quit. And went to the Divinity School at Harvard and then I returned to law school completed that and I have stayed in Arkansas ever since.

**Winslow:** Why did you choose to go to Princeton?

**Humphrey:** Well it was one of the places that I was interested in, being at Exeter, there were a lot of people who were in my class who were applying there and I was interested in staying on the East Coast at that time.

**Winslow:** What years were you at Princeton?

**Humphrey:** I was there from 1968 until '72; I started in the class of '72 and finished in the four-year program.

**Winslow:** What was your major?

**Humphrey:** Politics, that's the way it's called their not Political Science, just Politics.

**Winslow:** When you were at Princeton, were you politically active?

**Humphrey:** Oh yes. I was politically active in what was called the Association of Black Collegians, ABC. I seem to get ABC running quite a bit in my background, but that's what it was called at Princeton at the time, the black student organization. I was interested in the Third World Collation, in fact when I was there, we protested and petitioned and agitated for a Third World Center, which is still on campus as I understand. In fact, I was reading something at one point from some conservative who was attacking Michelle Obama and they were saying that they understood that while she was at Princeton she hung out at a place referred to as the Third World Center.

[Laughter] I was happy to hear that it was still going strong during that time.

**Winslow:** How many African American students do you think were at Princeton when you were there?

**Humphrey:** I don't remember the final number. I know when my class ended in 1968, we composed over half of the African American population on the undergraduate campus and there were about forty of us, so the other three classes together did not equal forty. And as things changed the other classes, while I was in subsequent classes during those next three years seemed to have about seventy-five or eighty per class. And the interesting thing about it was, I went there in 1968, it was still all male. We went co-ed

my sophomore year and of course we had to agitate for that as well, protesting. There were those that opposed it and what was interesting to me was that a lot of the alumni came over to the idea and notion of co-ed education when their daughters started applying. [Laughter]

**Winslow:** And there now a majority at Princeton?

**Humphrey:** Oh yes, yes.

**Winslow:** And I hear Princeton has a woman President?

**Humphrey:** Oh Yes. Tilghman, President Tilghman.

**Winslow:** When did you get involved in working for Shirley Chisholm and why?

**Humphrey:** I got involved with working for Mrs. Chisholm in 1971. I was actually an intern for the Joint Center for Political Studies and I was assigned to her office. I had applied for that in anticipating that I would be sent to Congressman Parren Mitchell's office. The reason being is that when President Nixon invaded Cambodia in 1970, Princeton was the first school—in the United States I believe—that went on strike. And, one of the things the administration provided for was that they would allow two weeks prior to the upcoming November elections for students to become involved in campaigns, particularly those that were interested in working for anti-war candidates. So there were a group of us from Princeton, who went down and did volunteer work in Parren Mitchell's campaign in Maryland in that year. And after that-then I applied for this program, Joint Center for the Study of Politics internship, having formed a relationship with Congressman Mitchell I was hoping to be assigned to his office, but instead I was assigned to Shirley Chisholm's office and the rest is history.

**Winslow:** Well that's what we want to hear about. [Laughter] What were your responsibilities in her office?

**Humphrey:** Well first I did a lot with citizen issues, constituency work. I answered a lot of correspondences, I wrote responses to inquiries that people made and people from all over the country. And then I started writing some of the speeches; I did some speech writing for Mrs. Chisholm. I also had the opportunity to attend events that people would ask for staff members to attend. For instance there was a conference that I attended at the Department of Defense on the Volunteer Army. And I got to meet General Westmore [William Westmoreland] at the conference, but it's because I was in Mrs. Chisholm's office and an intern in a Congresspersons office may get to do more than an intern in a Senator's office because senators have bigger staffs, so they already have people to do major stuff. But the interns in one these offices where the staff members are fewer may have a little bit more important work to do.

**Winslow:** When you were there do you remember who else was in the office working with her?

**Humphrey:** I remember Bob Gottlieb (Robert Gottlieb), I remember the staff members. People such as Carolyn Smith, Thad Garrett (Thaddeus Garrett), who was a republican that was a very interesting notion, but he was there. Patricia Lattimore, Helen Butler, Tracy Simmons Holmes. I hope I am not forgetting anyone; there were a number of people. And I am not sure if my tenure there overlaps with some of the people that I have come to know, but I know those were mainstays in her office at the time. Carolyn Smith was her Administrative Assistant and Thad was very, very much involved in her politics. Although I think Mrs. Chisholm's politics, going back to Tip O'Neil's

reference, to politics basically being local, I think a lot of that was handled back home in the district by McHolder (Wesley McD. Holder).

**Winslow:** What was the office like?

**Humphrey:** Oh it was wonderful.

**Winslow:** Why?

**Humphrey:** Well I had all these women I was in there working with so I had a good time in there you know and....

**Winslow:** Where you the only man?

**Humphrey:** No, no, Thad Garrett was there and then there some other interns from time to time such as Bob, but they took good care of us. We were interns and young, so they looked out for us and involved us in a lot of activities around the Capitol.

**Winslow:** Are there any stories that give you an insight into working for Mrs. Chisholm. Are there any stories that you can remember that give you an insight into what it was like working for her or being an intern?

**Humphrey:** Well I'll tell you what I got off into just actual politics because it seemed as though about that time she started talking about running for President. I was working there for the summer and I had a semester that I could take in Washington working on my thesis. So while I was there, I stayed in her office. And that's when all of this erupted about the Presidential campaign coming up in 1972. So I was involved in going to a lot of meetings and entering a lot of discussions with various people. I got to talk with a lot of the members of the Congressional Black Caucus, they wouldn't know me from anyone else, but I was just around and listening and sometimes entering the discussions that were going on about her running as opposed to some other person. Because there had been a

lot of talk, about it's time for an African American person to step forward and run and compete for the highest office of the land. And there had been some discussion among some of the national African American politicians about a possible candidacy of Mayor Carl Stokes of Cleveland or Congressman John Conyers or someone else running. And in that time Mrs. Chisholm just simply said, "I'm running." So that caught some people of guard by her declaration that she was going to enter the race, I actually attended the National Black Political Convention.

**Winslow:** In Gary?

**Humphrey:** In Gary, Indiana.

**Winslow:** Did you go to Northlink?

**Humphrey:** Northlink?

**Winslow:** The Northlink meeting?

**Humphrey:** No.

**Winslow:** That preceded Gary?

**Humphrey:** No, I went to Gary and that was very interesting. And I was out there with my Shirley Chisholm button on and there was a lot of opposition among those persons who were in attendance at that convention. Of course Mrs. Chisholm did not attend I think she probably figured that she would not get an endorsement and it would look bad to go out there and not come back with an endorsement and she just wasn't sure about it. I think two; she didn't want her candidacy to be portrayed simply as a Black candidacy at that time. And so she did not attend and those of us who were Chisholm operatives or Chisholm supporters out there at the time had to answer and defend a lot of things about her running.

**Winslow:** What sorts of things were brought up?

**Humphrey:** Now I'll give you... now this is a true story. I was in an elevator, a crowded elevator, a sandwiched elevator in Gary and I had one of those I think yellow Chisholm buttons that said Unbought and Unbossed. And some lady in the elevator and I mean we were really sandwiched like sardines, or something—packed. And some lady said, “Every time I see one of those buttons I get sick.” And Florence Kennedy happened to have been on the elevator and she turned around and said, “Well why don't you throw up?” [Laughter] I'm too much of a southern to be disrespectful to the ladies. [Laughter] You know Florence Kennedy she is pretty brash, she just turned around said—the lady was talking to me by the way—and Florence Kennedy heard her and turned around and said, “Why don't you throw up?” [Laughter]

**Winslow:** Did Flo (Florence Kennedy) support Chisholm?

**Humphrey:** Oh yes, yes.

**Winslow:** Do you remember if any women were at the podium speaking at the Gary conference?

**Humphrey:** Well State Representative Hannah Atkins of Oklahoma was one of the conveners. I think there were three conveners, as I recall; Hannah Atkins was one of them. Amiri Baraka, I believe was one and Mayor Hatcher [Richard Gordon Hatcher], if I am not mistaking. I think all three of them were conveners.

**Winslow:** Because the research I did, said there were no women speakers.

**Humphrey:** Hanna Atkins I believe was one of the conveners. And she had been appointed to something in Oklahoma by a republican Governor, Henry Bellman I believe.

**Winslow:** Because Coretta (Scott) King was there.

**Humphrey:** I had forgotten if she was there or not, I know that she did not support Mrs. Chisholm in that race.

**Winslow:** No she wouldn't and also Rosa Parks was there.

**Humphrey:** I didn't remember, now I don't know who Rosa Parks supported. I don't recall, I don't recall, I just don't know.

**Winslow:** Did you have any other relationships with the Congressional Black Caucus?

**Humphrey:** Not really. What it was, is having been an intern I knew some people who were, much like myself, in various offices. And so I dained certain responses from them about how their member was going in that race and what they were doing to support either Mrs. Chisholm or someone else. As I recall there were two Congressional Black Caucus members who supported Mrs. Chisholm, Ron [Ronald] Dellums and Parren Mitchell. I am not sure about anyone else; those are the two that I recall...

**Winslow:** Do you remember what her relationship was like with [Charles] Rangel because they served together in Albany?

**Humphrey:** I am not sure. The short answer is, no I don't recall. I'm sure they worked together on matters pertaining to New York, voting records are probably similar on a lot of things, but I am not sure if there was a close association. I heard her make more references to things she had been told by Adam Clayton Powell, who was defeated by Rangel then I recall having been be made in reference to something between Congressman Rangel and herself.

**Winslow:** Did she ever talk to you around the office about how she felt about the men in the Congressional Black Caucus because she was the only woman then?

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**Humphrey:** She was the only woman then, her position was that she always had to fight for whatever she got and so it was not strange, I think it was difficult because one reference by someone was that well “We don’t know if she is the Black liberation candidate or the women’s liberation candidate.” And I think that she did not like being put in that dichotomy. Mrs. Chisholm is a politician, so she was trying to get votes from African Americans, women whom ever she could...she is a politician and she considered that to be a political posture being able to go and seek support from minorities, as well as from women who were concerned about the advancement of women in particular causes.

**Winslow:** Were you paid at all?

**Humphrey:** Yes I was, as an intern and during that semester when I stayed there.

**Winslow:** Did her staff pay? Were you paid out of her office or through Princeton or what?

**Humphrey:** I was paid by the Joint Center for Political Studies one summer. And that semester that I stayed in her office, I was paid by her office.

**Winslow:** Did you ever go to Brooklyn?

**Humphrey:** Yes.

**Winslow:** Could you tell us about that?

**Humphrey:** Well Brooklyn was different. I am from Pinebluff, Arkansas originally so Brooklyn is city and is a part of New York. And I was amazed by the strength of the West Indian community. Coming from Pinebluff, Arkansas what I was accustomed to were southern white people and black people, southern black people. And so there wasn’t this differentiation between African Americans who had migrated from the South and those coming from the Islands. There just wasn’t that West Indian presence in

Pinebluff, Arkansas. So I had to get acclimated to the fact that there are these distinctions in a place like Brooklyn. They have this West Indian American Day Parade, which is really a great parade. They have...even you get to a point where there are differences between people from different islands. So that was interesting to me and informative, educational.

**Winslow:** Did you stay at her house when you were in Brooklyn?

**Humphrey:** No I visited her house, but no I did not stay there, no.

**Winslow:** And what was it like when you were at her house?

**Humphrey:** I just went basically by, I didn't stay in it very long. I just went by it one day...I don't know with Mr. Chisholm as well.

**Winslow:** Could you tell us about Conrad, Mr. Chisholm? He's still alive.

**Humphrey:** I understand that. Conrad was a person who didn't seem to be particularly interested in politics. He was informed because he read the newspapers everyday and kept up with what was going on and by osmosis of course, he had to be concerned about Mrs. Chisholm's politics. He was, during the time that I knew him and talked to him, he seemed to not have the interest in her really projecting herself into that Presidential campaign because of the fact that he thought that she would come under attack. And I think it was a matter of being protective of her in terms of his not really pushing her out there, encouraging her to do that, because he did not think that people would support her from the community that she was most closely associated with and to some extent that proved correct.

**Winslow:** Some comments about or some questions about the '72 campaign. In '72 you were a political activist, race conscious I am assuming.

**Humphrey:** Yes, yes, very much so.

**Winslow:** Sympathetic in many respects to the (Black) Panthers I am assuming, would that be correct?

**Humphrey:** Well in the sense that there was a romanticism about the Black Panthers during that time and the Panthers were a group of people who seemed not just to use a lot of rhetoric, but were willing to actually put their lives on the line. And that had some romantic appeal to a person my age at the time. In retrospect, putting one's life on the line might not have as much appeal; I am sixty years old now. (Laughter) I look at things a little bit differently, but I understood then...Another thing about the Panthers, the Panthers were more sympathetic to women's issues, back than a lot of other groups were. A lot of the other African American groups, for instance Muslims did not appear to be that open to the ascendancy of the role of women and the more traditional groups, while open on some level did not emphasize the way that the Black Panther party did.

**Winslow:** Excuse me; I was thinking more in terms of electoral politics.

**Humphrey:** Well it was interesting though, they did support Shirley Chisholm, as I understand when she...

**Winslow:** But I am asking about you, that is I don't want to describe you, but we are of the same generation and a lot African American militants eschewed electoral politics, so what got you interested in campaigning for her for President?

**Humphrey:** I think working around her, I think, to be quite honest I think initially, I thought it should be an African American male because I wasn't as attuned to women's issues at the time. Once she stepped forward though, I thought it made sense to have someone who could make an appeal to the emerging women's consciousness in the

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country, as well as to the African American community. And of course Mrs. Chisholm was just good on issues, the issues that she espoused she was excellent. So I thought she was a very good candidate and it also comes down at some point to the fact, well who has the courage, who has the desire to get out here and do that, who has the strength. And who has the willingness to do that and she is the one that emerged so that kind of speaks for itself at some point.

**Winslow:** She writes in *The Good Fight*, “My campaign in New Jersey was coordinated by a brilliant young Princeton student from Arkansas, Marion Humphries...” She got your name wrong...

**Humphrey:** She got my name wrong. [Laughter]

**Winslow:** “...Who had worked as an intern in my Washington office and volunteered in the mists of finishing school to help try to get Chisholm organizations set up in as many New Jersey counties as possible.” Could you tell us about organizing in New Jersey?

**Humphrey:** Oh that’s difficult; I was an outsider all the way around, so I didn’t...I couldn’t keep up with what was going on in New Jersey. There is one interesting story, there was a woman in Hudson County New Jersey and her name escapes me. Whom I thought was coordinating our campaign in Hudson County and I opened up the newspaper one day to see that she was on the uncommitted slate of former Senator Harrison Williams, that he had put together an uncommitted slate. So I called her and I said, “What is this?” She said, “Well Mrs. Chisholm said you do what you have to do. And I thought that would be the best way of being elected as a delegate to her campaign.” It might have some merit to it politically, but it was astounding to me that she’d be coordinating for us in that county and on an uncommitted slate, as opposed to the Shirley

Chisholm slate of delegates that we were encouraging people to put together. That's just one of the indications of being on the outside, not having any political clout what so ever and just being a starry eyed kind of young volunteer. [laughter]

**Winslow:** And an African America man with a Southern accent. [Laughter] Did she ever speak at Princeton?

**Humphrey:** Yes, yes.

**Winslow:** Could you tell us about that?

**Humphrey:** Yes she spoke to, I think it was the Association of Black Collegians event and it was an afternoon engagement and I think, there again was more support among females, African American females than African American males at the time. There was some support among African American males, but I think the impact was greater with females.

**Winslow:** And did you know off hand, Rutgers either in Newark or News Brunswick?

**Humphrey:** No, I couldn't get around to all those places, I was in school. Should have been working a little bit harder on my schoolwork, but I was doing what I enjoyed doing. [Laughter]

**Winslow:** There is no question about it, that Chisholm was very outspoken about her feminism, she supported abortion rights, homosexuality. I am probably implying every stereotype, but I am thinking of a young, Southern, African American from Pinebluff. Had you ever had those kinds of political discussions and what was that like for you?

**Humphrey:** Well I am southern, but I am also evangelical in my religious faith, I wasn't as much then. I am more so now and so maybe I have some differences of that, but I still believe it is a constitutional issue. I separate church from state and so where as my

religious views may say I am against abortion, I still come down with saying that decision should be made by a woman, that the law shouldn't enter into that because if there is a law against something, then there has to be some penalty if someone violates it. And I certainly don't think anyone should be penalized on those particular issues, so there is no point on having a law on that. I think there are some things that a person has to make a personal decision and I think the lord allows us to make mistakes on things. So even if I think something is wrong, I look at it through the context of is it something wrong according to my religious beliefs or is it something according to what I think should be state law and that's where I separate on something like abortion, that I think that is an issue that is really is... a person comes to on the basis of his or her faith. And her faith in the cases of that it is the woman's body that is involved in making that decision, so....

**Winslow:** But as a nineteen year old, young man, I mean were these discussions part of the campaign that young people would have?

**Humphrey:** As a nineteen-year-old young man....

**Winslow:** Twenty-year-old...

**Humphrey:** A twenty-year-old young man, you know I don't know that I was concerned about moral issues as much then as I am maybe today. It's just do what you want to do type of attitude that I had more of then, then I have now of course. But at that particularly point, I think that the issue was still, with me is whose call is it on these matters. And I have to come down on the side of basically that it is basically the woman's decision at that point. And whether anyone else likes it or not is a—I hate for that issue to be reduced to a power type thing, the woman versus the man. But at some

point according to the law, somebody has to be the person to make the call and I think it's the woman's call. And I think if people who don't believe in abortion, such as myself in that sense, you got to persuade them, I mean you can persuade people, but if you can't persuade them. And I don't think that the law should penalize on that issue.

**Winslow:** But you never had, I am just curious if you have had conversations with Mrs. Chisholm about some of those issues that you may not have had until the campaign got started or you got involved in politics.

**Humphrey:** I think that was just an issue that young people addressed. And where I was at Princeton most people probably said, "You do what you want to do." And least that's the way I think people at that time were looking at it, so it wasn't an issue that, most people of my generation, where I was and around where I was, probably had much difference of opinion on it. I think most people thought that it's a woman's right to choose—it's a matter of choice.

**Winslow:** Liz [Lizabeth] Cohen, when we interviewed her talked a lot about, not necessarily the political splits, but the contesting over who really was Shirley Chisholm, between shall we say the National Organization for Women, white feminist women and black organizations. And in *The Good Fight*, Shirley Chisholm also writes about, she'd go to Florida or she'd go to California and she's very specific about it, she says the NOW [National Organization for Women] women say "Your doing, a-b-c-and-d." And that the black groups would say, "No, but we've got you doing a-b-c-and-d." Did you, were you aware of that kind of a conflict?

**Humphrey:** Not really and again not only did she not pick up support, outspoken support among some major national African American leaders, but the feminists leaders I

don't recall being real Shirley Chisholm supporters. I saw one, it might have been an article I don't know to whom the quote was attributed, but it said, "We're not going to allow Shirley Chisholm to rip off the women's movement." I'm not sure what person said it or if it was a person who said or if it was something that was in one of the magazines at the time, but I think that when some of the feminist leaders did not support her and made statements to the fact that they support the concept of a women's running, her position was, "I don't need half baked endorsements." and I think that she received that from some of the leaders of the National Women's Political Caucus.

**Winslow:** Right. Did you go to Miami?

**Humphrey:** Yes.

**Winslow:** What was that like?

**Humphrey:** Oh that was interesting, that was really interesting. (Laughter) I enjoyed Miami; we were disappointed we didn't have more impact. I was disappointed that there wasn't more impact, but that convention was not handled very well in one sense. Being there on site it probably was more real than what we now see in these carefully crafted and managed conventions that we see on television, where they knew better than to have the presidential candidate making his acceptance speech early in the morning, in the wee hours past midnight. So everything is planned, organized and there is very little left to chance, so it was more open and free wheeling. But I thought that by that time, it seemed although not absolutely a forgone conclusion that Senator McGovern would get the nomination that it was just about at that point. Hubert Humphrey tried some last minute things. I was interested in—I attended the Black Caucus meeting and it was evident she

had emotional support within that caucus even from people who weren't supporting her; I think that she gathered a measure of respect there.

**Winslow:** Did she attend that too?

**Humphrey:** Oh yeah, she made a speech there. She made a speech at the Caucus of Black Delegates at that convention, as did most of the candidates, except for maybe George Wallace.

**Winslow:** He was in the hospital.

**Humphrey:** He had a representative who I don't think was allowed to speak.

**Winslow:** Although she went to visit him?

**Humphrey:** I know she did.

**Winslow:** How did you feel about that?

**Humphrey:** Fine, fine. I think that it would have been a little bit tacky had she not gone. And I think that differences aside I think there is a certain amount of civility that ought to exist among people and just a certain amount of decency. And he had been shot and so I think that had she not gone it would have been in bad taste.

**Winslow:** When Dellums it became clear was not going to put her name into nomination, the only thing I have seen is the Shola Lynch film, you get a sense of disappointment. What was your experience about that?

**Humphrey:** Well I think that he was under enormous pressure from the California delegation at that point and from, especially the Hollywood types who gave money and campaigns, but Ron Dellums went for as long as he could I think. And Parren Mitchell also and it was interesting, I was surprised, well I shouldn't say, Percy Sutton did place

her name in nomination I believe at the convention. And that was interesting because I did not know what kind of relationship they had over the years.

**Winslow:** It was good one and at Sutton's funeral, Chisholm was mentioned as being, he was a mentor of hers.

**Humphrey:** Really? Well I wasn't sure about that one, I really wasn't, but I do know that he did place her name in nomination at that convention.

**Winslow:** You said you went in with one set of expectations, what were your expectations going into the convention?

**Humphrey:** Well I had a set of hopes; I was hoping that it would be more deadlocked so there would be more room for negotiating and maneuvering and exercising some leverage. I also hoped that some of the uncommitted delegates would swing over to her especially in the African American community. I was hopeful that some of the African Americans in New York would support her and I don't think she got very many votes. She probably got more support out of Louisiana I think than other places and some out of Mississippi. But...

**Winslow:** Shirley Friedman was very active for her in Mississippi. Do you remember that name?

**Humphrey:** I do not remember that name. No I do not.

**Winslow:** She had altogether 151 delegates; and since her name was placed in nomination she still remains the only woman who has had that many.

**Humphrey:** Right yeah and...

**Winslow:** It's a big difference today then it was a gazillion years ago.

**Humphrey:** Yeah, Hillary of course, Hillary's tough, she's tough.

**Winslow:** Did you have to do any work fundraising?

**Humphrey:** No, no. I didn't do fundraising. I didn't know anything about fundraising; I'm just a student doing volunteer work. Somebody gives \$10 or something like fine, that's fundraising as far as what I would be concerned about.

**Winslow:** And how did Princeton students act towards your activism for Chisholm?

**Humphrey:** Well some didn't, Princeton students do their own thing, so most people probably didn't pay any attention. Some might have, but those that I associated with knew I was involved in it. And some helped out where they could, attended some functions.

**Winslow:** After the '72 convention, you went back, you graduated from college. Did you keep in touch with Mrs. Chisholm?

**Humphrey:** Yes I did, I sure did. I sure did. I always sent her Christmas cards, Valentine's cards, things like that. Mrs. Chisholm was a mentor and she was a wonderful person to work for. Yeah she was very nice and I enjoyed her office, I enjoyed the atmosphere in it. And I enjoyed the fact that she stepped out of line to do something, she was before her time. In fact, I've had one of my best friends from college say, "She was just before her time," in terms of stepping forward on the issues pertaining to women and particularly African American women because a lot of them probably did not believe at the time, that African American women could aspire to some of these things. I believe some of hers had to do with her West Indian background though because the West Indian people are accustomed to having positions of leadership because they are in the majority on those islands and places and so it's nothing mystical to them to seek to play a leadership role.

**Winslow:** Can you comment on Mrs. Chisholm's demeanor, the way she dressed?

**Humphrey:** I thought it was fine, Mrs. Chisholm dressed well and she dressed as a middle class woman did. She had a couple of more, she had more than two mink coats I think—you know she dressed well. She was an accomplished African American woman and so her dress represented that. Now of course in these days, I am not sure people wearing mink coats the way they did back then, they kind of shy away from them because of the animal rights issues and concern over that. But in her day that was perfectly proper dress and in illustration of the upward mobility of African Americans and I think she represented that very well.

**Winslow:** What did you do after '72? You graduated, you said you...

**Humphrey:** I worked at a newspaper for a year. I went to law school, I stopped. I went to divinity school and then I went to back to law school and I finished and I took a job in a prison ministry working with Charles Colson. Now Mrs. Chisholm had a question about that, but the fact of the matter is I was interested in prison ministry. Not in the politics of Charles Colson—now that's an interesting story because in order to get that job with Prison Fellowship I had to turn in some references, letters of recommendation. And they never got the letter from Shirley Chisholm. [Laughter]

**Winslow:** Yet she was very active in her church in Brooklyn, did she strike you as a religious woman?

**Humphrey:** Yes, yes. I thought so. I knew she was a Methodist. Yeah she made that known and I really got an idea of that from the funeral program, from the church in Florida where she was funeralized, but yes, I think that was all a part of her upbringing.

**Winslow:** Looking back what did you get out of working for Shirley Chisholm?

**Humphrey:** Well...

**Winslow:** What stayed with you?

**Humphrey:** That independence and that if a person is going to be in public service, that person ought to be in it to make a difference. I don't think people can really understand the impact of Shirley Chisholm on the African American, women in particular, just by the 151 delegates she received at the Democratic National Convention. There were a lot of people who developed a little bit more guts in terms of what they should aspire to because you got this little woman out of Brooklyn saying that she wants to be President and that has some impression on people who fought for it and that right to do it. I think her impact was strong on women, more so than one can determine from just those 151 delegates, even though that's significant too. But just stepping out of place and being on the front line, I think that people felt that about her, that she would speak up for things that she believed in. And as she always emphasized she wanted people to know that she had guts. So I think she helped me with having some guts and I do consider myself and my running part of her legacy and part of being a protégé of hers in that extent. I might have always been involved in politics anyway, but what I got from her was very, very helpful, extremely helpful. And I am very grateful for that opportunity that I've had in working with Mrs. Chisholm and being there at the time when I was there and seeing some of the things that I saw.

**Winslow:** You told us earlier about her opinion about the Kennedy's, do you want to retell your story?

**Humphrey:** Well I can't say what her opinion was about all of the Kennedy's, I do know that she did not have a close working relationship with Robert Kennedy. And

Robert Kennedy was the Senator from New York during the time when she was in the Assembly. And that Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Project I believe. I am not sure that he brought her into it as well as she thought he should have during that time and I think that had something to do with the lack of close working relationship that particular program and maybe some others. Now I always loved Robert Kennedy because what other politician did I know, white politician, who could go in Harlem after Martin Luther King's assassination and try to calm the waters and things of that nature. So that was interesting to me that she did not have a closer working relationship with him particularly since he was the senator from New York, but I saw that she supported Ted Kennedy in the race in 1980, in the primaries where he challenged President Carter. And so I didn't think she had a strange relationship with any of the Kennedy's and on issues very, very close to where they were.

**Winslow:** I think that is about it. We can cut this off. So thank you very much.