

SNCC 40th Anniversary Conference: Remembrance of Ms. Ella Baker by Anne Braden (CONT'D)

Date: April 2000

Location: Raleigh, NC - Shaw University

Host:

[Chuck McDew](#) – Founding Chair of SNCC and early student organizer

Prayer:

[Charles Sherrod](#) – SNCC Field Secretary / Leader in the Albany Movement

Moderator:

[Ivanhoe Donaldson](#) – SNCC Organizer / Innovator in community organizing and political strategy

Speakers:

[James Lawson](#) – Nonviolence Theorist / Influential mentor to SNCC

Anne Braden

Comments:

[Leslie McLemore](#) - SNCC Organizer / Organizer of the 1967 Black Power conference and political strategist

[Michael Thelwell](#) - SNCC Publicist / Founding chair of Afro-American Studies at UMass Amherst

[Lawrence Guyot](#) – SNCC Organizer / Chair of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party

CONTINUED FROM [PART 6](#)

****NOTE:** Video begins with remarks already in progress. **

Ivanhoe Donaldson: She took us to a store. She wore a shirt, slacks and jacket and a tie. She dressed us up, and she says, “Now you look like lobbyists.” And then she said, “I expect you to act like lobbyists.” Within that framework, I want to introduce to you again [to] a wonderful human being. One of the people who guided us along these treacherous paths — Anne Braden, thank you.

Anne Braden: Thanks, Ivanhoe. Oh, am I talking into this mic? Can you all hear me? I have trouble with mics, so I’m not really a speaker. I think I’m a writer, but I’m not really a speaker. Have trouble with mics, and people say I get soft as I talk. So, for some reason, I don’t know why. Wave your hand if you can’t hear me.

By the way, I’d forgotten that first time you came to Louisville [KY] — I wish you’d come back. I had to get over here leaving a whole bunch of crises in Louisville right now. Things go on and on and on.

And Chuck [Charles McDew], I was not at the first SNCC conference, and it was the only one I ever missed, because I just had a baby. And it’s true that some of us...we tried to do all these things and have babies too. [It] created some problems. But we — it happened. But I missed that. But I was very much knowing, watching it, because I remember those weeks well.

What was it? It was just from about February 2 to April, after [the sit-ins started in Greensboro](#) [NC], and being on the phone with [Ella Baker](#). And she was telling me about how she was trying to pull together this thing — it’s time for the students to come together. And said she was dependent a lot on Jim Lawson, because Nashville [TN] was—all these things were happening in Nashville.

And I think that, for people like me—and by the way, I wasn’t that much older than y’all, but I see why I was one of the old folks. And that was—oh, that was touchy all through those years, because us old folks had to make sure nobody thought we were trying to take over or control things. I was with SCEF, [Southern Conference Educational Fund](#), and we really bent over backwards.

Sometimes we probably should have said something. I’m thinking some things I should have said, but we didn’t. We didn’t want any of these young people to think we were trying to tell them what to do. Because too many adults really weren’t doing that—or wanted to use them, and stuff like that.

I think I was 36? No, no, I was 35—in there somewhere, which I consider kind of a half a generation. I said I was a half a generation older than those kids. But for those of us who had been around a little while in this, we were so excited about what was happening in the sit-in movement and the young people.

And we forget—and God, I can remember being at a workshop at [Highlander \[Research and Education Center\]](#), in [19]59. I forget what it was—but all kinds of workshops—and I can't remember what it was called, but I remember so vividly people sitting around bemoaning the fact: where is the younger generation? I mean, really, that's what they were saying.

And I was traveling around—[Carl \[Braden\]](#) and I both were there too. We would go to various campuses because [of] all the things going on, we were trying to get support. And a lot of campuses, you'd find a little tight group of folks that were activists and all that, but they were very small, and not many people were listening to them. It's known as the silent [19]50s. You've heard of that.

My theory about the [19]50s is they never were as silent as a lot of people have written it up in books, because there was always—that was the repression of the [19]50s. That's when I came into things—was at the height of the Cold War in the late [19]40s, early [19]50s, when all this repression of the Cold War at home and abroad [was] descending And to me, in the struggles—what I call the resistance movement—of the 1950s existed.

And because of circumstances in my life, I had to get around and travel all over the country in the early [19]50s to try to stay out of jail in Kentucky. And so it was a very privileged thing, looking back on it, because I met the people all over the country who were resistant, who were never silent. So the [19]50s were never silent.

And Jim was around then. You were doing things in the [19]50s. There was a resistance movement. The people who would fight against racism, who stood up against segregation then, people who fought against the Korean War, all these things that were going on. And so that movement was there. And I have a real emotional attachment to that movement. I think the first thing you ever do in the movement is the most important thing in your life.

You all who went to Mississippi in the early [19]60s—there'll never be anything like Mississippi. Well, to me, there'll never quite be anything like that esprit de corps that those of us fighting back in the [19]50s had. We really felt it was us against the world, but we were together. Sort of like you talked about it on the biggest scale—it's in the [19]60s. And you talk about family. I call it the scattered brotherhood and sisterhood. And you knew when you met somebody, they were part of it, so forth.

So there were things going on. But the younger generation — where was it? A lot of them were silent. And, of course, it had started to break. I always say the beginning of the end of the 1950s

was December the first, 1955, when Rosa Parks sat down on that bus. That was the beginning. That was the beginning. And after that—it was a while before people caught on—but after that, and of course, all that happened in Montgomery and other places around the South—there were other bus boycotts, remember that, Jim—and all these things happening.

Still, the students weren't there in any great numbers, but there were things happening. And I've had a lot of trouble all these years trying to—and most people, I guess I haven't convinced that weren't a part of that, who think that that's what broke the pall of the [19]50s and changed the direction of the country. And eventually, when the young people came into it in the [19]60s, in the early [19]60s, shook the very foundations of this country and produced all these other — suddenly everything was opened up to question. And it produced all these other movements — the anti-war movement, the women's movement — every movement that's come since, that's where it came from.

And I'm getting off the subject. But anyway, that was — but where was the younger generation? And I think about that. And then all of a sudden, here was Greensboro. Here it was, all like wildfire over the South — [Nashville](#), all these places. And we were very excited.

And I think about that sometimes today, because I hear people saying today — that are trying to deal with these massive problems Jim talked about today — “Where are the young people? Where are the young people?” And I think we're beginning to hear from young people today. They'll be there. And so we were very excited about it. And that's what Ella says. And she said, “It's time to bring them together.” I knew about it. I just wasn't here. I missed that one. The only SNCC conference I ever missed. After that, I came.

But let me just say — and I won't talk too long. I did too much preliminaries there. I tried to think about what to say this morning. And they told me originally — when Martha Norman called me, I guess — that the topic of this panel was “Ella Baker in the Radical Tradition.” That's what they told me. They changed the name of it. So that got me to thinking. See, and as I say, there have been so many crises in my life, and in where I live, and lately, that I didn't have time to sit down and really think about it.

But as I'd ride around, going here or there, I got to thinking about that. What can I say about Ella Baker in the radical tradition? It's very interesting, because it made me think about: what does the word “radical” mean? We use it a lot, but what does it mean? So I got to thinking about that.

I've been fighting a losing battle for years to get people to quit saying “the radical right,” because that's just a contradiction. You can't have a radical right. And what they mean is the extreme right, but they say “radical right.” But I've lost that battle. They still say “radical right.”

But then—and I've always thought of radical as, you can get the definition of it — you go to the root of what's wrong, You try to change the whole thing. You don't pick around the edges. You

get to the root of it and change society, change the world, make a new world. And I think that sort of gets at it.

A lot of times we think of radical, if we're away from that "radical right" craziness, we think of very theoretical theories of social change. [Karl] Marx and all the other various things that came, different branches of that and so forth. And people figuring out these things from books, and often doing very, very good things after they've done that.

But I couldn't fit Ella into that. And I don't know. Now, maybe somebody here has, and I want to hear it. I don't think I ever heard Ella—and I was with her a lot—ever talk about her theory of what this new society was going to be. Exactly what it was going to be. An analysis of the one we had, the things we think of when we think about radical theory. I never heard her talk about that.

To this day— and I looked again to—where's Joanne Grant? Is she here? Her book recently said, well, did she [Ella Baker] say? And then I thought about it too, that I don't even know, and maybe somebody...I don't know what Ella's religious beliefs were, specifically. Now maybe some of y'all know. You do? Jim doesn't think—he doesn't remember. Well, I don't think I ever heard her talk about it.

I'm sure she had faith, but she didn't—I didn't hear her talk about that. But then I thought, well, maybe somebody did. Maybe there'll be somebody at that conference who heard Ella spell all this out. Because I didn't.

But every time I talked to Ella through many years—and we stayed in real close touch. And I hadn't met her, but we got in real close touch. It was always in the midst of some crisis. And we were talking about some situation that she was trying to deal with and help deal with, and help people deal with, or some individual that was in a crisis, who was part of our movement, and things like that. It was always those immediate things that we talked about. So I don't know.

So I thought, well, I'm going to have to look at Ella in the radical tradition—because she really was. If you want to talk about the roots of the society, she really was. So I got to thinking about what was it that Ella was really doing? What was she trying to do? And I came up with two or three things I just want to mention.

Like Jim, I'll mention things, they take time to expand. It seemed to me that she had, I think, one of her abiding faiths — and she said some things you can sort of put in words about this — is that people — just plain people — should run the society they live in. We don't do that. We weren't doing it in 1960. We sure not doing it now.

But she had a belief that that should happen and that it could happen. It became a slogan in the [19]60s — what was the slogan? "We want some control of the decisions that affect our lives."

And, slogans get kind of hacky, and you don't think about them anymore. But I think that she had that deep commitment that people should run their own world.

One of the things she did was she facilitated — is the word that comes to my mind — people coming together, wherever they were, to begin to do that. She wasn't going to do it for them. But she believed they could do it. She had absolute faith that they could.

And if you think back, maybe, to situations you knew Ella in, if that's kind of what she was doing. She was facilitating people coming together and knowing that they could run their society — if it was just Podunk, or a little town, or this state, or eventually the country. But you gotta do it first where you are. And I think she knew that. And so she did that.

And the other thing that I thought that she did... well, let me just say. When you think about “radical,” the idea of plain people running the society they live in is pretty damn radical. And really, it's what we haven't solved yet. Today, as we're trying to organize different things, one of the worst problems we run into is people being hopeless. “What can you do?” Black, white, green, people of all ethnic [groups]: “What can you do?”

And in a way it's harder to grab hold of now, Jim, than it was then, because you had lunch counters. Now it's the global economy. That's what makes, to me, Seattle [WA] so exciting, because people were getting a handle on: How can we speak to this faceless monster—the global economy? How are we going to control this?

Well, you gotta start where you are, and Ella knew that. Wherever, little town you're in, you're not taking on the whole South immediately. It grew into that. But I think she knew you start where you are.

But I think that, in a way, that is the big question that has always faced the human race, really — politically, economically, socially. I'm sure there are other questions. But how in the world do people really control the world they live in and create a good life? How do you do it?

Hadn't been answered all through history. We've stabbed at it. You found the answers for a while. Some people find them. Then things happen, and it goes away temporarily. But that's still a big question and that's what she was about.

And I think also that she had this tremendous faith in every human being whose life she touched. And I expect that's what a lot of you remember about her, that knew her. She believed you could do anything that needed to be done. She really believed that. So she made you believe it. She gave people faith in themselves—not by preaching—just by believing in you, by being there when you needed her, when you wanted to call, you had a problem.

I know I heard Ella say, “I've tried to make myself available. When people need me, I've tried to be available.” But it's more than just being there as the voice on the other end of the phone. It's

that she really believed that in every one of us there was something creative, tremendous, beautiful and that could make a difference.

And because she believed in us, we could believe in ourselves. And she had that ability. And that's quite radical, because you can't build these movements without those people—individuals—who believe in themselves.

But finally, she didn't think one person could do it by themselves. And one person—sometimes people say Rosa Parks did. Well, I don't know. That was the spark, but people had been working in Montgomery [AL] a long time, including Rosa. Rosa didn't come out of the blue. She'd been beating sidewalks, trying to get people to join the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] for years before she sat down on that bus, or refused to move on the bus.

One person standing up can make a difference—can raise a banner. I think Ella was convinced that to get things done, you've got to have organization. You've got to be organized. And I think that's what she realized when the sit-ins were sweeping the South, and it was obvious that change was coming.

I think it was Roy Wilkins—I don't usually choose him to quote—but I remember he said: “When a whole generation decides something is wrong, it's dead.” And that was happening. It was happening before the Raleigh conference. I think he said it was obvious that this form of segregation was going to go because the young people had decided it was going to go.

But, you see, I think Ella sensed that that's not going to be enough. That people have to come together and organize if we're going to go on from there. Because I'm sure everybody knew lunch counters weren't the real issue. I mean, who's going to risk their lives for a hamburger ?

And everybody knew that that sat on those lunch counters too. I don't think anybody thought they were really there for the hamburger, did they? I don't think so. They had a vision. They had a vision of a new world. They really did.

But she knew you needed organization. And that's why she said — and I think, so far as I know, this was her idea at the conference. Because I remember saying: “It's time. We've got to try to bring these students together.” And that's what she was doing from the base of SCLC [[Southern Christian Leadership Conference](#)], where she worked, and with Jim's help and the help of other people, she got y'all on the phone.

But she knew that power of organization. She knew it in Mississippi, with the [Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party](#) and all down — she never forgot that.

And I think that the other thing finally—and I don't know where this comes from. Some people have it. She had a sixth sense—of sensing when a society is at a point when it can move. And this was one of those moments of seizing that moment. And she knew that.

When Montgomery happened, she was in New York. She set up this thing, I think, called *In Friendship* in New York.¹ She'd gone back there—she was living there—to support Montgomery. She knew that there again the organization had to continue. It's not just one act. She knew that.

But she also had that sixth sense of knowing when something can happen. Things percolate a long time. I tell people that trying to come into things now. They said they went and demonstrated, and they got people out, and we still got the problem.

I said, "Well, what do you expect? We're fighting 400 years of history." When we're talking about and dealing with racism and that kind of thing.

You look at the mass movements. People see *Eyes on the Prize*, they see movements back there, they see thousands of people marching in the streets. So they think they can go right out there, and you march in the streets.

Every mass movement we've ever had came after a lot of mundane, hard work. Like Rosa Parks in Montgomery, beating the sidewalks, knocking on people's doors that don't want to talk to you, calling 20 people for a meeting and getting five. And then you try again next week. That's what happens. Then it explodes. But she knew that this was the moment.

I just want to finish because it was a very moving comment you made, Chuck, earlier about how this band of people was a family. We loved each other and all that. You did a lot more than that.

I mean, sure, there was this love and comradeship, like I said, some of us up in the [19]50s. When you're fighting a common battle, that's what builds the ties in your life. I said people you're the closest to are the ones you went to jail with.

But it wasn't just that. I think that one reason I think you had that sense of community and family was because, even if it wasn't always articulated, you knew that you were part of something that was going to change this country. You really believed in a new society. And I tell people today...people say SNCC didn't have any philosophy, didn't have any politics. I said, oh yes, they did. They had a vision. They talked about the Beloved Community.

And I said that sounds kind of gooey today, before those people talking about—I said it didn't then, because people were willing to die for it. And as I say, you don't go out and die for something except a big vision. You don't die for a hamburger. I'm not even sure you die for the

¹ Ella Baker, living in New York during the Montgomery Bus Boycott, helped establish *In Friendship* to provide ongoing support for the movement, reflecting her conviction that lasting change requires sustained, organized effort beyond isolated events.

right to vote. If you are willing to die if you have a vision of a new society, and that's what people had, I think. And people, as far as I know, really didn't define what this beloved community—

[Applause]

I never heard anybody, maybe they did—define exactly what this Beloved Community was going to look like or be like, but there was the definite knowledge that it wasn't going to just be a society where people loved each other, although that was going to be part of it.

I think if you could generalize it anyway—it was going to be a just society where every human being was respected and had an opportunity to live a creative, full life. I think that's what it was about. I think that's still a good vision today. You can refine it, you can make it, you can have your own theories about it and how you're going to get there.

But we don't have a movement that can really change things unless people have that vision of creating a new world. So you gotta know what cathedral you're building when you put your stone in, because stones are getting kind of heavy.

And I think that what you of that generation did is—I don't think the story's been told enough yet. A lot of history books don't seem to understand it—that the people who met here in Raleigh that weekend changed this country. Now they didn't change it enough, Lord knows, or we wouldn't be run ragged now, some of us.

And there's a whole thing—what happened—and that's another story. I've got my theory about what happened and why the movement didn't go on when it should've. I know a lot of people disagree with me, and I'm gonna argue about it—not right now, maybe this weekend we will—because I think I know what happened.

But for that shining decade, you set the agenda of the country. Never got political power then, but you set the agenda of the country. And it was a humane agenda that was forever moving things—broadened democracy, if that's our theme, for everybody. Which makes me so wild when I hear the reverse discrimination thing, and how what Blacks gained took something away from whites.

Everything the movement gained broadened rights for everybody, and in very practical ways. I go to these colleges—these white kids—how many of you here on Pell Grants? Frankly, all of them, if you're not at Harvard. Nothing like that until Blacks demanded equal education, and whites got it too. And a lot of working-class whites went to college. That's just one small example.

But for that decade, you shook the country, you raised up this vision, and when I talk to young people today, I say the people who changed things in the [19]60s—they were no older than you.

They were high school students. Sometimes they were 17 and 18 years old in Mississippi. Hollis Watkins is here somewhere. And other people from the bowels of Mississippi who were 17, 18 years old. Huh? 14, 16? Okay.

And that's why it upsets me when I run into young people—I was roped into teaching a class on civil rights history at Northern Kentucky University a couple of years ago, and I couldn't believe it. I had these young people—realized that they didn't have any notion of changing the world. I said, that's what being young is all about. Where are you all?

But that's what you did. And I think you got to realize that. And realizing it, as Jim says, if we know that that could happen—what happened in terms of really changing the country, but not enough—we thought, and I really want to talk about what happened. That if we did it once, and you did it once, it can be done again, and it's more needed now than ever before.

People say to me sometimes, "You're living in the [19]60s." I don't romanticize the [19]60s. I was here, and I know a lot of problems that happened. People don't understand the importance of that decade. It was the most important decade in the history of this country, except the 1860s, for the same reason because it took—

[Applause]

People tell me I'm living in the [19]60s. What they really mean is, you still want to talk about racism. That's what they mean. And we're beyond that. There are other issues. I said, oh no, you're not. No, you're not. You're not going to deal with any of the rest of it. God knows, there are other issues, and there's all these things that people [don't have]. No medical care, no decent housing, we know all the problems.

You're not going to deal with any of them until we deal with racism. Because as long as people of color can be written off as expendable, which is what they are in this country today and in the world, then you're not going to solve the other problems, because they are acceptable victims of all these problems. So you have to.

And how you do it today—desegregation, integrate. That word "integration"—I'll just say, , that's become a bad word. And the reason is that a lot of white folks—had a very different idea, I think, from African-Americans, I think, about what the struggle was all about. And it comes out very clearly today, because I think to African-Americans—I'm learning the world and all, Black and white, and all the other struggles of people of color that came to center stage, really because of this struggle in that decade—it meant freedom and liberation.

Whereas to a lot of white people, unfortunately—and they still haven't seen it yet—that the whole movement for desegregation, integration meant: we'll bring Blacks into our world, which

we will still control. Afraid that lesson hasn't been well enough learned yet. If we did it once—or if you did it once—it can be done again.

Ivanhoe Donaldson: Anne Braden. She's a wonderful person, and it's such a pleasure to hear and participate and listen to her. It was a time when she was considered one of the most dangerous people in America. I mean, can you believe that? No, I mean, we're just a weird society. Yeah, without question.

Vincent isn't here? I thought that we would—we have about 15 minutes to ask a few questions of the panelists, for people who would like to make kind of personal statements as it relates to Ella Baker in particular, SNCC in general.

I know that Larry Guyot came into the room, and he and Ms. Baker shared the struggles of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in terms of leadership. And Mike Thelwell. Connie Curry is here and during those early birthdays of SNCC, was a major force in helping us move together. We all tried to talk Jane Stembridge into coming here. Some of you don't know her, but she was the first sort of volunteer, I guess you could say, SNCC ever had—working with Ms. Baker, as Sherrod mentioned last night. I guess if there was an official first staffer, it would have been Charles Sherrod.

So I think it would be kind of nice for people to make personal comments, and so forth and so on. So we'll get started, given time. Brother McLemore.

Audience Comment [Leslie McLemore]: My name is Leslie McLemore of Mississippi. I live in Jackson [MS], and I worked with Ms. Baker too—in Washington—where I worked with Charles Sherrod, Frank Smith, [indistinct name] when we did the [Atlantic City Challenge](#). In fact, I was the only specific person on the staff.

I would just want to make a statement. This conference reminds me of the old SNCC meetings. The structure is the same, and I think it's important that we have the structure, because McDew was the chairman, we called him chairman—and we should.

And you look at the program, all you young people here from different colleges and universities, you look at the program—the program reflects the old SNCC structure. There are people on the program that are on the program multiple times, as if there were not other people instead doing things. There are a number of other people, as I looked around this room, who worked in Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia, who made contributions.

And I want to say to the planning of the program, they did a tremendous job, a wonderful job. I'm glad we're here. I'm excited about being here. I wish I had brought my 15-year-old son. This is great.

But I just think that as we discuss this weekend and the next several days, it's important that we also remember that a lot of us have a life beyond SNCC—that a lot of us are doing things in our communities that are very important. I've been working in Jackson, Mississippi since 1971, been involved in a variety of community activities, and I still am.

I'm mentoring five young persons in my community. I'm president of the local chapter of the 100 Black Men. I'm a mentor for life. I've been involved in all of the recent struggles in Mississippi. I'm on the city council in Jackson, and I'm doing a lot of things.

And so I just think it does not really reflect reality—although this is a SNCC reunion—we're talking about Ms. Baker. We all have our elevator stories, who were in SNCC. But I think it's important that we expand our horizons.

I say to you young people that as we talk about the old days—and they're very important—but also we need to talk about the future. We need to talk about what we're doing now, because there are some people in SNCC who went on to do great things, but there are some people in SNCC that's really not doing a lot of things now. But they did things then. And I think it's important we get them off that glory for a few days.

But I think it's important for all of us in SNCC to be engaged in our community. And then I just want to say that it is important, from my perspective, for us to really talk about where we are now, what we're going to do to attack this system of racism now, the conversations that we should have in our communities about race and about what we can do to solve the problems. I think it's important that we talk about that now, because we have 40 years' perspective.

And then let me just say, in conclusion, Ivanhoe, that I think after 40 years, at the 40 year reunion, that we should have had a program—at least there was a keepsake program. This program is a great program, but the appearance of the program should have even been better. It's very clear to me that we don't do these kinds of things in our daily lives because we move on to other venues. Thank you very much. Ella Baker, here is a great lady. SNCC, here is a great organization. Thank you.

Ivanhoe Donaldson: Let me just make one little thing clear, so that we maintain a historical perspective. There are a lot of writers here in the room. For some of us, this is a reunion. But this conference is not a SNCC reunion. This conference is a conference about SNCC and about Ella Baker, being sponsored by Shaw University and NC State. And the conveners of this conference are Dr. Charles Payne and Dr. [M. Iyailu] Moses...given within that frame of reference—comments and considerations and concerns, I think, will be respected and understood. But in some ways, as I tried to make earlier in my remarks, we sort of intruded into a celebration that someone else was convening here. So I think we should understand that.

Oh, Dr. Payne. Where's Dr. Payne? Dr. Moses? Are the planners of the conference here? Could they stand, please? Here? So there's Dr. Charles Payne's back there. Well, I think one of the things we need to do is—let's give a round of hand for these people who have done this.

[Martha Norman](#), where are you? Martha, this is your moment in the sun, and you're not here. Still working. We want to say thank you for this wonderful conference and that they've convened for us.

We hope that a lot of stuff will come out of it and come forward. When you see these people here, ask them questions, discuss with them. They are building a new intellectual platform—or expanding intellectual platform—on our behalf. As we wrap this session, is there any other comments that people would like to say about Ms. Baker? Mr. Guyot?

Martha is here. Get your applause Martha. Martha was also one of those young 17-year-olds up at the time. I think she was at the University of Michigan.

I was going to get Mr. Guyot first, and thank you. Mr. [Michael] Thelwell. Go ahead brother Mike, go ahead.

Michael Thelwell: I just wanted to move forth a thanks to brother McLemore. Because I have to admit that I'm guilty as charged. I came back here in the presence of my old SNCC comrades and it gave way to sentimentality and nostalgia. It was only when McLemore got up with his contentious Mississippi self, that I stopped romanticizing the [19]60s. I remember what SNCC meetings was like. And I thank you my brother.

Lawrence Guyot: I humbly wish to dissent from both of my brothers. I'm proud to be in a chapel on a campus that provided an academic arena to one of the greatest Americans that ever lived. Ella Baker took on Martin Luther King and every minister in SCLC. Ella Baker was an advisor to Eleanor Roosevelt. How do I know that? She told me that.

Ella Baker gave the founding speech at the Freedom Democratic Party when [Victoria Gray](#), [Annie Devine](#), and [Fannie Lou Hamer](#) were on the floor of the House. Adam Clayton Powell and Congress insisted that they not go on the floor of the House. And the three of them asked Ella Baker, what should we do? Should we go on the floor while the vote is being taken or not? And Ella Baker, looking at them, said, "Y'all are pretty good at making decisions. You don't need my help."

I think that if we are privileged to be able to come to a university—remember the only three universities in the South that promoted dissent, only three: Miles College in Alabama, that great institution in Mississippi called Tougaloo.

I'm talking about the administration supporting demonstration. Let us not fall into the trap of using this thing, this great celebration of one of the greatest Americans that ever lived to enter into our personal schisms. We got a responsibility to the students who are here.

And while I'm speaking, I want the students who came to James Farmer's memorial, who came from North Carolina to Washington, D.C., and they were playing a football game that evening—are any of them here? They haven't arrived yet? I want us all to meet them. Let's make this an opportunity to share experiences. Let's do to the students who are here what Ella Baker has been to all of us.

Ivanhoe Donaldson: I know there are a lot of passions in the room, and that's as it should be. We do have to wrap, however, because there are other sessions. Martha Prescott would like to deal with some housekeeping matters. And I want to, once again, give a wonderful hand to our panelists: Anne Braden and Reverend Lawson.

M. Iyailu Moses: I just want to make sure that everybody who's on a panel knows that your meals will be provided at the Student Center cafeteria here. Just identify yourself as a panelist. It's also my understanding from the hotel that everyone who's booked in the hotel for this conference—panelists and people who are coming under their own auspices—is entitled to a free breakfast Saturday and Sunday morning at the hotel. And you go to the desk to get a ticket. You have to show your room key at the desk, and they'll give you a thing for—it's a little more than a continental breakfast—yogurt and fruit and so forth.

Okay. Oh—the Sheraton. At the Sheraton. Those who are staying at the Sheraton.

Okay, and we'll take a five-minute break, and then we'll assemble for the plenary on the birth of SNCC. **(AUDIO ENDS CONTINUES IN PART 8).**