

## Oral History Excerpt: Carnell Locklear

Background: Carnell Locklear was an activist for Lumbee Native American rights in Eastern North Carolina in the 1970s and 1980s.

**Carnell Locklear:** The Indian schools was not up to par to the other, to the white schools. I'd go in the Indian schools, and sometime I just walked through hall and look at the wall and see that the bathrooms, and I'd go to a white school and do the same thing, and the difference would be tremendous with the upkeep on the building. So we went down there and we took over the board of education. Me and Dennis Banks and all we fellows done that and that brought attention up. So the board—

**Interviewer:** What do you mean, took it over, you just—

**Carnell Locklear:** Went down there and sat on the grounds, stayed on the grounds for three or four days. Got the news media involved, and that made a difference. So we got that pretty well [unclear] because they didn't want no bad publicity. I said, if you will correct all these deficiencies, I'll back off. So they began to work on it.

## Oral History Excerpt: Ruth Dial Woods

Background: Ruth Dial Woods was born in Robeson County, North Carolina. After marrying and moving to Detroit, Michigan for several years, Woods eyes were opened to the discrimination and segregation that Native Americans faced in North Carolina. She moved back to North Carolina, where she became an activist for equality.

**Ruth Dial Woods:** It was a time of hope. It was a time of hope, I think. Blacks, whites, poor whites, Indians, anyone who really had a mutual mission of equality, what it provided to us was hope. I regret to say that I don't sense that hope out there now at all.

**Interviewer:** Were there specific deprivations or discriminations regarding Indians that you noticed more when you came back from Michigan that you were particularly concerned about when you were involved in the civil rights movement?

**Ruth Dial Woods:** I didn't have to go to Michigan to notice them. As I told you, I came up in all Indian schools. I came through the era when we had the separate restrooms for whites, blacks, and Indians in all the stores in Lumberton, when you had separate seating arrangements in the movie theaters for whites, blacks, and Indians, when you had the separate water fountains.

**Interviewer:** How would that work?

**Ruth Dial Woods:** Oh you just had three of everything with a sign to it.

**Interviewer:** How would a theater be arranged? What would it look like?

**Ruth Dial Woods:** Downstairs you would seat all the white customers. Upstairs you would have one section for blacks and one section for Indians. I guess I came back having seen that you can walk around freely and that there are other opportunities and



advantages and when I came back and saw that people were still subjected to this kind of humiliation and indignity, I became more radical about trying to encourage and challenge the system and to become more vocal. I guess it was just a natural that the civil rights became my way to really put those things into motion and into action.