

[00:00]

Jaranika: Salutations and good morning. On behalf of South Memphis Shalom Zone, Knowledge quest and Crossroads to Freedom and Rhodes College, I would like to thank you for taking your time to share your story. Today's date, July 1st, 2015. My name is Jaranika and I attend Hollis Price High School.

Romeo: And my name is Romeo Patterson, and I attend Grad Academy Memphis.

Jaranika: Let's start out with some basic questions about you and your life. Then we will ask more specific questions about the neighborhood. What is your name?

Steven Young: Steven Young.

Jaranika: If you don't mind me asking, what year were you born?

Steven Young: 1966.

Jaranika: Where were you born and raised?

Steven Young: In Memphis, Tennessee.

Jaranika: And what is your occupation?

Steven Young: I'm currently on disability. I do not work.

Jaranika: Did you marry?

[01:00]

Steven Young: Yes.

Jaranika: What is your spouses name and occupation?

Steven Young: I'm divorced. But her name was Tamika Young, Steven my son.

Jaranika: Did you have any other children?

Steven Young: No.

Romeo: Can you tell me about the neighborhood you grew up in?

Steven Young: The neighborhood I grew up in was in the Coro Lake area. It was pretty much like one big family in the neighborhood. One big family. Everybody looked after everyone's kids and we all just grew up together as one.

Romeo: Who were your parents?

[02:00]

Steven Young: My parents was Annie Young and Wesley Young.

Romeo: Could you describe your parents?

Steven Young: Well, my mom, she was a homemaker. My father he was a brakeman on the Amtrak, with Amtrak, the railroad.

Romeo: What school did you attend?

Steven Young: Well, I started out at Coro Lake Elementary and then I went to Westwood High, where I graduated from.

Romeo: What was school like for you?

Steven Young: It was interesting. We were just getting involved with computers and it was coming a long real good. I liked it.

[03:00]

Romeo: How did segregation impact your educational experiences? I mean – well – what church do you attend sir?

Steven Young: I attend Evening Star Missionary Baptist Church on Mississippi in South Memphis.

Romeo: What is your church like?

Steven Young: It's a Word Now church. We're basically a neighborhood church where we welcome all the community and anyone to come in. We love. We deal in love.

Romeo: Amen. Can you share some of your memories from your childhood that influenced you later on in your life?

[04:00]

Steven Young: Well, my memory of childhood is, you know, we stayed close as friends. We never grew apart. We kind of followed each other along the years. We went our separate ways, but we kept in touch.

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- Jaranika:* What does South Memphis mean to you?
- Steven Young:* South Memphis mean to me, you know, a neighborhood that they have a thirst for love and a thirst for knowledge. And if there's a lot of love itself, there's a lot of **dream** and communication. I take that highly. I look at that as a high point.
- [05:00]
- Jaranika:* What was South Memphis like in the '60s and '70s?
- Steven Young:* That I do not know. When I come to South Memphis, it was in 1990, and at that time they had the Carter Fish market where you could go – you could buy raw fish or you could buy a plate lunch/dinner. They also had the metro shopping center area over here and the grocery store, the phone places. They still now striving to Four Way Grill or so. There was a lot going on in South Memphis. Lots of interesting things goin' on in South Memphis.
- Jaranika:* Before you moved to South Memphis, may I ask, where were you living before you moved here?
- Steven Young:* Before I moved to South Memphis, I was staying in Indian Hills in the southeast part near Chickasaw Jr. High, and staying there is was real loving. It had it's ups and down, but more ups because at that time they were doing different things for the neighborhood. The part commission would come out and do the summer **league** lunches and also had summer programs going in the neighborhood.
- [06:00]
- Jaranika:* Is there a big difference is South Memphis in today and back when you were younger?
- Steven Young:* Yes.
- Jaranika:* What do you feel is the biggest difference?
- Steven Young:* The biggest difference is a lot of the kids that come up, a lot of them moved away, and some still here but a lot of businesses closed up. It kind of hurt the community in a way, but it's rebuilding back.
- [07:00]
- Jaranika:* Were the people in South Memphis different than they are now?
- Steven Young:* They similar. They about similar.
- Jaranika:* What is the reputation of South Memphis?

Steven Young: Well, the reputation of South Memphis they say is ZIP code is a low income area, rent low. And they give a negative view of South Memphis, but you know, when you come into South Memphis, you realize we had a Four Way Grill. We have Stax now, you know, Lemoyne Owen and there's a lot of positive. The Gaston Library and all. There's a lot of positive things happening in the South Memphis area. You just can't look from the outside and see that. You got to come in and make yourself seem friendly to the neighborhood and find out there is a whole lot going on that is positive.

[08:00]

Jaranika: Do you feel that the reputation is changing over the years or is it staying the same?

Steven Young: It's changing.

Jaranika: What are some places in South Memphis that make it a better place?

Steven Young: The LeMoyne-Owen College for one. It's been there for years and also we have the Stax Museum that's in South Memphis that's doing great things. The libraries got some great things going on. They got a training section going on now where you can go there if you don't have any computer skills, where they'll teach you and train you in that. Also with the Knowledge Quest, they're a bit part in South Memphis with their afterschool care, the day care, and now they got going on the parenting class. All this is bringing a bright future back to South Memphis.

[09:00]

Jaranika: What do you think would make South Memphis a better place?

[10:00]

Steven Young: The community coming together. When we come together and we want it to, that's when great things happen, because all of our ideas come together and we can come up with a great idea to improve and just to move South Memphis up even higher.

Romeo: With new renovations in South Memphis like Collage Park, are you hopeful about the future of South Memphis?

Steven Young: Oh, yes. The College Park, you know, it's a great place and it's changed a whole lot from where this area used to be and more family oriented now.

[11:00]

Jaranika: Do you have any fun memories of your life in South Memphis that you could share?

Steven Young: Oh, yes. I know I was staying in **fire home**, when the fire home was there, and me and my brothers and sister and some of the neighbors around, we used to pull a grill out and just grill out and everybody from the back side, everybody would just come out. They had a good time. Played music, have a good time.

Jaranika: How would you compare race relations in Memphis then and now?

Steven Young: Say again?

Jaranika: How would you compare race relations, different cultures and things, how would you compare them then, before now, how was your experience with different races in South Memphis?

[12:00]

Steven Young: Well, for me, I basically just go with treat others like you want to be treated. I don't want to look at the past. I focus on the future. Then we all of us can come in unity and move forward without constantly looking back. It's all right to look back at what you've been through, what different change happened, but when you look back, you also got to focus forward. You can say, "We got to correct from doing this way that didn't work to convert over to a new way that will work."

[13:00]

Jaranika: Do you have any advice for the youth of today in South Memphis?

Steven Young: Yes, one is getting that education. Get involved in something that you're going to enjoy and that you can make a part of your life. Just going through the motion of getting an education and getting a job and then you're getting up in the morning, "Oh, don't want to go to work," dreading going to work, that's not really a successful thing. But if you get into a field that you love and you want to do, you wouldn't mind getting up going to it. Just don't focus on something settling. Get something that's a passion for you and you love to do. That way you'll have a greater chance of succeeding.

[14:00]

Jaranika: Is there anything you would like to add on that we haven't covered?

Steven Young: I'd say in everything you do, just put Christ first, and when you put him first, everything else will fall in order. That what we're doing here with the South Memphis Shalom.

[15:00]

Romeo: Thank you for participating the in Crossroads Freedom project.

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