

Narrator: Ashley Lockett

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Interviewer: Robby Lockett

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[00:00:06.00] Q: My name is Robby Lockett. I am a professor of history and director of the Margaret Walker Center at Jackson State University. Today is August 10, 2021, it is 2 p.m. central standard time and I am here with Dr. Ashley Jordan. Dr. Jordan, just for the purposes of the record will you state your full name and spell it for us?

Jordan: Sure, Ashley Jordan A-S-H-L-E-Y J-O-R-D-A-N.

Q: Thank you and do I have your permission to record this interview?

Jordan: Yes, you have my permission.

Q: Let's start with a little bit of biographical information. Could you tell us a little bit about yourself? You know, when you were born, where you're from, a little bit about your family, how you grew up, your educational background, those sorts of things.

Jordan: Sure. I grew up in Mansfield, Ohio. 80's baby. I'm the oldest of four. I would say in our household, yes there was a strong emphasis on education, scholastic achievement, athletic achievement, things of that nature. I think in my younger years, as far as schooling went, education, I think I went to college because it was the thing to do. I don't think I really had a career plan or idea in mind; I thought I was going to get married in college and my husband would have the career. You're just different...what you go into college thinking. But really I would say it was being a part of the Ronald McNair Scholars program, which is a trio program, where I started to think more about my career and the things that I wanted within my profession. Because I was so unsure, I literally spent one semester like changing my majors; I went from journalism and mass communications to like, event planning, interior design, and through an advisement session with our chair of the history department he explained to me "you know, Ashley but you like history...you know why don't you major in history." And I said "well I only, I don't want to teach history." Because that's the only way in which I saw history be explained or taught was in the classroom and he was saying to me, "well what about public history?" and I'm like "I've never even heard of public history," and that's when he went on to explain to me that public history is the study of history that belongs to the public and it's seen in battlefields, historic homes, and monuments, and it's often told from an interpreter's perspective. And from there, I was like well tell me more. Because if I could just talk about history, I would do it. I just didn't know there was a career. And he got me connected to the political science department because they were offering internships, open to all majors, to intern at the national level. And I interned at the Smithsonian's American history museum and my site supervisor was Faith Davis Ruffins, who was this well-respected curator in her own right, and basically it was like the internship that changed my life in the sense that I felt, upon the conclusion of that internship, I

had a career plan, a path, and a way in which to achieve my goal. Because the way in which I thought I knew history, because of that experience, it was like taking this pop can and showing relationship and meaning to what an artifact and how it had significance in history. it was just, it blew me away. I loved it.

[00:03:36.00] Q: Where'd you grow up and where did you go to school?

Jordan: I attended Lexington Public Schools, which is in Mansfield, but like in the suburbs of Mansfield. I graduated high school class of 2003, and I went on to Kent State University for my undergrad degree, and then I went on to Howard University for my post-graduate work. And I got my master's in museum studies and my doctorate in United States history.

Q: And where do you live now?

Jordan: I currently live in Cincinnati, Ohio, where I serve as a Senior Director of Development for the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.

Q: Did you have any kind of professional experience before you came to the museum field, or was this something that you got turned on to in college and then kind of came straight into it?

Jordan: I would say from college. Just having that internship experience and experience having a strong intern coordinator definitely helped as well, because she helped to define more about what history is. Because, the other thing too, just understanding about history is all the specializations, and when I kept saying I wanted to be a history major, she was like “well what kind of history? There's military history, there's European history, what kind of history do you want to specialize in?” and I was like “oh, I didn't think about that.” You know, just breaking that up. But just from working with her, we were working on a project called the Scurlock photography project and it documents the story of the Scurlock, I think it's the father and the son, and they basically, through visual culture, had documented the Black experience in D.C., going as far back to like the 1900s through the '60s and how, through images, it just told the information of opportunities as well as sometimes the challenges of living in our nation's capital. But it was just, I was amazed and from there she kind of advised me on where were the schools that offered, you know, strong public history programs. And I knew I wanted to come back to D.C., because in areas of the interest with the museums, the Smithsonian, how they call it the National Mall? Yes, that is true because they do have a little bit for everybody: the sciences, the natural science. I mean, it's just everything is there, and so I wanted to come back to D.C. and being there at Moorland Spingarn, when we were working on a project for her, seeing that repository, also seeing, when we had a chance to tour the history department, they had a picture of the history club dated 1913, and for me, I went to predominantly white schools K through 12, and to see that image for so long, I always felt like I was the one. And to be surrounded in an environment where there were other history majors, I was like “oh this is the school for me.” I was so...and it was the best decision of my life.

[00:06:32.00] Q: So you talked about the internship and Faith Davis Ruffins and that experience and how it turns you on to the field. What about the post degree, the stages of your career that led you to your position now?

Jordan: While there at Howard, I had a chance to gain employment through the National Park Service through their student temporary employment program. One of my first sites that I worked at was the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House located in Logan Circle. We told the story of the National Council of Negro Women. From there, I had a chance to do a stint with the National Park Foundation. I had a chance to go to Omaha, Nebraska, to look at the Mayhew Cabin which was one of John Brown's last stops before Harper's Ferry, and we had a chance to basically look at a feasibility study to help preserve this site because, unfortunately, because of interstate travel, the original location of the cabin got moved and so it disrupted the historical integrity of the site and so once they replaced it somewhere else, they were still trying to get that historic denote, marker placard outside. But just how to construct that application and also to give evidence for the fact that because of the interstate changes, which affected everyone at one point, how to still get this place recognized, and so I would say those practical field applications help to edify my interests and love for the work that I do because it kind of basically helped to turn my career path. I always thought I was going to be a park ranger because I loved it. From there, I went on to the Arlington National Cemetery, the Robert E. Lee home, where we told stories about when the union soldiers came to confiscate the home during the start of the Civil War. The fact that that cemetery is still an active cemetery, the fact that when you see sometimes, unfortunately, those soldiers...at the time I was interning was soldiers were still coming home from Iraq war unfortunately, and to see those getting buried there or those ex-

retired military people getting buried, it lets you know the price for freedom is not free and we tell those stories about why freedom matters and those who gave the ultimate sacrifice. And so what I like most about the work that we do is being able to be connected to history but also living history. And that was a great reminder for me, and I would say from there, while at Howard with the National Park Service, getting connected to the Association of African American Museums, understanding that there are other sites dedicated to African American history and culture, definitely helped to expand my lens to the possibilities of where I could possibly go with my career while working there at the park service. I was nearing the point within my PhD plan where I was ABD and the opportunity came, like I think on like the listserv, that the Ohio History Connection was looking for a curator and one of the things that I noticed from some of my peers, and I would just advise anyone who's in the field, or not so much in the field but in school looking to gain experience, I say do it now because it just makes you much more well-rounded upon the completion of your education. Because I saw some of my friends who, you know, had the education but when it came time to get the job, it was saying that because of their lack of experience they had to go with another candidate, and so I was like well I need to get me a job in the field and so I'm grateful that the National Afro-American Museum there in Wilberforce offered me the role as curator. So when I was ABD, I accepted my first role in the field in Wilberforce telling the story of local history; how this was the first, you know, privately owned African American institution purchased through the AME church, basically be a higher learning institution for African Americans to have options upon the completion of like the K-12 education and the role of African American farmers, the fact that it was Underground Railroad site, I mean it just goes on and on and on. But it was a wonderful experience so when the opportunity came for me to go to the Freedom Center as a curator it was a lateral move with more responsibility, in

the sense that I went from a small institution to an institution that was like 158,000 square feet. We have multiple galleries, we have a tourism of upwards of 100 ,000 people yearly, and how the importance of your mission, how your mission, the word of freedom can just attract people, but how it has a universal meaning for, you know, economic freedom, for social freedom, I mean it goes on and on. Religious freedom. I've never seen a mission have so much impact and that was important for me to see that, too. So I would say, again, the education coupled with the field assignments and those career moves were very helpful for me, as well as being connected to affinity clubs because you do need that time to recharge to get inspiration and to share and to discuss the nuances in the field.

[00:11:55.00] Q: So you went from Wilberforce to the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center?

Jordan: Yes

Q: And, now, you talked about your role there. Can you tell us a little bit more about what you do on a day-to-day basis there?

Jordan: Sure. So I'm no longer a curator; I have since had some other leadership roles. So I was recruited, when I was a curator there at the Freedom Center, I was recruited to come to Evansville, Indiana to serve as their executive director. I had finished my PhD in history and I

was recommended through the Association of African American Museums, so the importance of being connected to affinity clubs. So they put the call out, they wanted to meet me and I went there and at first when I went, I was like “I’m not leaving the Freedom Center.” It’s just because we had everything, you know, it’s a wonderful institution, to go to a much smaller market in, all intents and purposes, in the middle of nowhere. Like Evansville is southwest Indiana on the Ohio River. The way to get there is like, two-lane highway. I was like, I’m not feeling that. But once I toured the site and saw the need, I began to question myself as far as, you know, “well Ashley, why did you get into this this line of work? You know, you did it to make a difference,” and I had just got done watching the movie *Marshall* about Thurgood Marshall and how, you know, by all intents and purposes, he could have been the who's who before he ever became like, on the Supreme Court because he was just so brilliant, but because of the way things were with segregation and race laws, he wasn't. But he made it his mission to go to these like unknown, lesser-known places where people didn't have the resources, to fight these cases for them, in the hopes of raising the racial, you know, equality for all. And I was like, “Ashley, I couldn't be a student of history if I didn't reach back and help those that are in need,” and this museum was in need and so I was glad that I was able to come. We did what we needed to do in two-and-a-half short years, but basically we raised the profile of the museum to have more visibility, the importance of collaboration, by us collaborating with the right entities, to help grow the mission; one of the things I’m most proud about for that institution: they had a small scale budget. I said their budget was like \$300,000, and one of their biggest grants since the opening, like the capital campaign, we were able to get a grant from Toyota for \$40,000 and we were able to overhaul two exhibits on the first floor that were outdated to make them now new, hands-on technology stations, as well as we did an exhibit about Legos called “Community Building” because the site

that I was at was the second federally funded housing project through Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Public Works Administration, and so for kids today, they really couldn't understand, you know, what it was like to live in a housing project. But what they now know, or at least they now know now, is that through play, we talk about what it was like to live in a housing project. And so my time there was very much so rewarding in the sense that I got to understand the ins and outs of the day-to-day operations of museum work. Also being able to get connected to the stories that make up our exhibit cases, that local history element that you sometimes don't get when you're at a bigger institution, how the stories that you tell are, could be your neighbors' down the street, and that was a wonderful opportunity. And then the Freedom Center called me back and asked me if I would like to come and head up their finance department, the sense of development, memberships, grants, foundations, and individuals and corporations, and I've been in this role now for a year and I'm pleased to say that, even in the midst of a pandemic, we've been able to reach our fundraising goal. The Freedom Center has an operating goal of \$2 million and we were able to surpass that, and I would say thanks, in part, to just our individuals helping us during this pandemic to give those donations as well as applying for those COVID relief grants. So I would say my experiences as a curator and then my experiences as an ED (executive director) and then even now as a fundraiser. People always ask "well how do you go from being a curator to a fundraiser?" and honestly I would say it's because of these practical experiences, I'm able to do the work that I do. But I'm now, I'm in a new lane in the sense that I tell the stories about why certain projects should be funded. I tell the stories for why this program matters or why this area of exhibit needs to be improved. That's the thing that I'm most proud about the work that I do, is how I'm able to connect people to our mission and through their financial resources we're able to make a greater impact at our institution.

[00:16:55.00] Q: I don't know that you said it, but what's the official name of the museum in Evansville where you were the executive director?

Jordan: It's the Evansville African American Museum.

Q: Thanks. So, in terms of your day-to-day work, what are some of the biggest misconceptions you run into and some of the unknown aspects of the work you do?

Jordan: I would say some of our misconceptions that we're working through, we understand that... sometimes I think people think that because we're a national institution that we get federal funding, and we don't. We are the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center because of the name of the scope in which we want to study, the discipline of the Underground Railroad; like, our site is not just a regional history museum, it's not just a state museum, but we want to explore, nationally, the concept of the Underground Railroad. But then how it pertains to contemporary times, we deal with topics related to human trafficking as well as mass incarceration, and we now have an ongoing commitment for social justice. So that is one area that we tend to have to have a lot of conversations around, because people assume that our budgets are already allocated through the federal government and it's not. We rely heavily on public funds of our corporations, grants, foundations, individuals, and as well as our front door

admissions. So that's one misconception that we worked through. What was your second question Robby?

Q: Just the unknown aspects of the work that you do that someone might not know if they, you know, heard that you were a fundraiser at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.

Jordan: I would say another unknown about our institution...I think sometimes people will look at us and, because of all the attention, I think now, recently given to cultural sites, people will sometimes challenge us, as if, "does our narrative still matter." "If there's a National African American Museum on the Mall, you know, well, what are you all doing? Or if there's a museum coming down in Charleston, South Carolina, well they're already talking about the slave trade, you know. Well how do you all fit into this story?" And I think the one thing that we are constantly having to show, or at least to celebrate or maintain, is our uniqueness to tell the story solely on the Underground Railroad. Because the one thing that we try to say is that the vastness of African American history, and the ways in which it affects different areas, deserves its unique point of view based off of that institution's perspective. So I think as the world continues to turn and education is required, we have to maintain our individuality as an institution, and this whole concept of "why don't you just" ... I don't know if people just think you should just merge together, or I don't know...they just think, it's just like something should happen where all the museums should come together, but it's like, it doesn't work like that.

Q: You mentioned that, of course, being at the Underground Railroad Freedom Center, that your work touches, today, on contemporary topics like the prison industrial complex, human trafficking. Wondering how you, in your work specifically, and also how the museum and the Freedom Center, approaches these kind of, what can be controversial, complicated topics, through public history, through the museum itself?

Jordan: Yeah, a great question. We feel as if we have an obligation to tell the story unimpaired for future generations. Some of our key founding members for our institution was Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth, who was the great civil rights champion, and within our early institutional documents, he was always stressing the importance of “if we don't tell history how it should be, it'll never be how it ought to be.” You know, just stressing the importance, in the early years, of how we have to tell the truth, you know, unvarnished. You know, it is what it is. But also that we are a convener site to have these tough conversations. That you should leave here educated, inspired, and aware. That's our job, in return, that we will have these facilitated conversations. Right now, we have a series called “Unmasking the Realities” where we talk about topics really relating to today, whether that be police brutality, subjectivity is a law, where we discuss the issues there on the capitol building, we talk about food disparities, as well as mental health and awareness for African Americans. Because what we've seen from our statistics, from our feedback from visitors, we have to go from just being sites where we collect history, and we have to be active participants in history, and so...and I don't think, like, we don't have to set trends, but we have to be relevant, and our audience appreciates that. Because when they have questions, they come to us, because at the end of the day, as statistics have shown, museums are

seen as sites for public trust and I do believe that we have to lead those conversations for awareness as it relates to social responsibility issues ongoing in this country.

Q: Does that make your job as a fundraiser more complicated?

[00:22:50.00] Jordan: I would say, in this, you know, post-pandemic...well excuse me, not post, we're still in a pandemic, but I would say post-George Floyd, even as we're continuing to having these conversations for racial and social equity, we've always been in these conversations, it's just the awareness now that people want to do more. So I would say, in the past there might have been funders who might have wanted to steer away from this conversation, now are calling us because they want to be in the conversation. So it's been a good game changer for us, but then we have to just be like, well we're glad you want to have this conversation now, because I think initially when we were pitching, it was like "oh there's no issues here," you know, "we're fine, we're good." But now I think, post-George Floyd, people are re-examining their policies, their practices, and so through that self-examination, we're happy that they've come to us to help facilitate those questions or to lead programs to help them.

Q: So we've got a couple of ways here that I would like to segue into the next few questions, and along these lines, I'm wondering what are now the biggest challenges you face in the work you do, and what do you see as some of the greatest rewards?

Jordan: Sure. I would say some of our big challenges in our field, particularly in this non-profit field, it's twofold. Sometimes I guess the question is... because, I know, I guess it's more so about the economics of being in non-profits. How to retain talented people when the pay scale is not comparable to, like, a federal rate or corporate rate, and unfortunately sometimes we get people in these roles and it's almost like it's a placeholder until they find something else. Because, unfortunately, we just can't offer those salaries and I do believe that is something that we are re-examining as an institution. It's important because people have to live. Like, I think this pandemic has shown us, from what we've seen about people are not returning to work, because they are making more money you know kind of being their own entrepreneurs, or making you know being Etsy entrepreneurs, like, just everyone's finding new ways to make it, and if it's for them to be consultants, they're doing that, too. So I think as we look to the future, one of the challenges I feel that nonprofits have to do a better job of is retaining talented people, as well as the importance, for when we do bring on people who are non-museum professionals, the importance of onboarding. Because unlike any other non-profit, we're a museum, and the way in which we structure ourselves, the way in which we conduct ourselves, there's levels to this, and I would advise that they, you know, take the time to read those introductory museum 101 books. I know it may be redundant and it might be tedious, but it's necessary for your self-education, because you just don't want to go out here blind. So I think that is, that has to be a part of the orientation; that museum, that training, cause I know we talk a lot about your benefits and the things of that nature, but I know sometimes for me, as a leader in this museum world, I'm spending a lot of time going back to the basics.

Q: Well since you mentioned this, I'm going to go off script, what is the one or two museum 101 books you would recommend for people going into the field to read?

Jordan: I would say, I'll probably give you the exact titles, because I could be, you know, totally paraphrasing, but it's museum administration and I have, I can see it right now, but I'll give you the title for that, it's museum administration for sure. I think the one book that is like my go-to guide for any museum professional, I just feel like you have to have some type of finance, some type of understanding of the flows of money. How this works, how to get your program funded, I know some people are like, kind of leery about asking for money, but you should be able to maintain a budget, know what the costs are, indirect, your outputs and outcomes, how they all affect, you know, things. And so I would say *Fundraising for Small Museums* is an excellent book for anyone who's a novice, just wanting to understand more about how this all works. And then my third book, I would say as it relates to museum education, I think it's important to look at, and I might be saying this wrong Robby, you might be able to help me, is it *From Storefront to Monument*?

Q: Yes.

Jordan: If your interest is in cultural studies, it's important to understand the narrative of how African American institutions, how they got their emergence from, really in the sense, going from private homes into museums. I think that's important.

Q: I would just like to emphasize that I did not prompt you to say that. My students are reading that book this semester, so thank you very much for reinforcing it.

Jordan: You're welcome, you're welcome. Yeah, it's at the basis, and there's another book, which I'll find it, Faith Davis Ruffins did a really good overview of the history of kind of like, speaking to the importance of how, for so long, museums didn't want to deal with topics of slavery and insurrections, and it wasn't until the movie, the airing the of the miniseries, *Roots*. How, you know, academics and scholars had to revisit and re-examine the way in which they look at museums and the stories they tell about African Americans. So once I find that article I'll send that back to you, too.

[00:28:56.00] Q: Thanks for that. So a little bit of a different line, but going back to something you mentioned earlier, wondering how your work has evolved to meet the demands of this ever-changing modern world, especially in the age of COVID-19?

Jordan: I would say the ways in which our institution has changed to meet the needs of the 21st century...I think it has helped us to re-examine our technological accessibility, in the sense that I think for the longest, we were, you know, just getting, you know how you just “oh, it's okay, we can keep using it.” No, when you see the playback, and then you realize that there's three different camera qualities going on here, it's just not a good look. So just having those checks,

cause I think sometimes that AV/IT budget comes, sometimes can get neglected, and because of this pandemic, we've had to really look at the ways in which we communicate our messages on social media, through marketing, the way in which we even conduct our meetings. Like, I have never in my life, in this museum world, ever thought that I would spend a day looking at the best software for like, speakers and monitoring...you know, just because the times have required us to look more virtual, more at these hybrid experiences, and the one I was looking at, is called like an Owl, it's like a speaker. Because we were having issues with, like we went, I know we tried WebEx, I think we prefer Teams, but Zoom...you know, just, you gotta find the right format, but then also allowing our participants to be able to join us no matter where they are. And we didn't have, in our boardroom, any camera set up, but if it wasn't for the pandemic, we wouldn't have known these things and so just having those inventory checks for technological advances, making sure that we're just as concerned about those things as we are talking about our exhibits, making sure they get the right amount of attention for programming, because we now know that if you can't get to us, you can now reach us via our technological social media platform. So that has been one good change that i have seen that the pandemic has brought to us.

Q: A little bit of a different line, I'm hoping you can talk about your experience and history with the Association of African American Museums. You mentioned it, but a little bit more.

Jordan: Sure. I would just say my experience with the association as an affinity club, again, just speaks to the need for why representation matters. Coming from a predominantly white K-12 educational system and then coming to Howard for my graduate work, it was just such an

awakening for understanding and for culture and appreciation. But then when I had went to Wilberforce, within their archives, at one point the association's papers were housed at Wilberforce, and so seeing those documents, I was like, I didn't know...I mean, I had heard, but to see it you just kind of, it just blows you away...and, from there, I went to my first conference in...I think it was Alabama? And ever since then...I think I went to my first conference in 2014, I've been going ever since. If it wasn't for the pandemic, I had like perfect attendance, you know. But it was just that chance to be around other museum professionals, because even at an HBCU, I know it's a misconception that, well there's going to be museum professionals. No. There wasn't. I was the only one...and so being in that association of other museum professionals, seeing another curator my age was like, it was wonderful. It was everything I needed; It was a perfect recharge, that mentorship, spot on. But the Association of African American Museums has definitely been an invaluable resource for my professional, as well as my personal, growth, because I feel like every time I go, it's like homecoming. You know, reconnecting with my friends and having fun, but yeah it's been wonderful. And the way in which the association gives back, that's the part that I love so much about...it's not like, you know how you can pay into an association and you're like, oh, they just sent me a newsletter, it's this, is that. No, they really try to connect us, to be better, and I would say the one good thing that they offered which helped me there in Evansville, they had that partnership through the Association for State and Local History, STEPS, and we got paired with the mentor through the National African American Museum where we basically compared our institutions to see if we had, to see if we were operating on a national standard. And basically, I would say it was like when Chef Ramsey comes to your restaurant and you open your books and they have to like, tell you what you're doing. But it was so good to know, because we needed to know where we fared, and there was

areas where we did really well and there was areas for growth and opportunities, but it just made us a better institution, and that was through the Association of African American Museums and getting connected to the STEPS program, and all those resources that the Association for State and Local History offers, taking financial courses, balancing the books, I mean it's just been really helpful.

[00:34:40.00] Q: And your role within AAAM today is what?

Jordan: I serve as a board member.

Q: And how long have you been on the board?

Jordan: I think two years, because we met in Jackson, in Miami, and then...yes, so two, yeah.

Q: You've mentioned some of the people who've impacted you, I was wondering if you might talk more about them? You mentioned Faith Davis Ruffins at length, but who are some of the other people that impacted you the most in the black museums field?

Jordan: Dr. John Fleming...just his work there in Wilberforce, even once I left, you know, Wilberforce there at the Freedom Center, just always being a wonderful source of inspiration and

support. He's been wonderful. Howard University, we have our museum's director of public history, Dr. Elizabeth Clark Lewis who has just been helpful, and I would say the strength of our program is our upperclassmen who have gone through the program, who have made, you know, their way through the ranks of their various industries or fields. Dr. Joy Kinard with the National Park Service, she's been like a wonderful mentor to assist me along this way. Eola Dance, I would even say, just because of the association, like, getting connected to people has been helpful. Like, before I even knew you, Robby, I knew you because you're always being helpful, you know what I mean? Just it's, like again, it's like a family reunion, people just are very welcoming and it's nothing to just strike up a conversation and get connected to someone else. That's just...people believe in being reciprocal and helping that person, whoever your interest is, getting connected so that you can go further.

Q: What's your vision for the future of the field?

Jordan: I would say my vision for the field is that we are one that is holistically sound, in the sense that we have cultural institutions with financial sustainability, organizational support for growth, as well as collection stewardship. I think at the heart of what we do, which makes our site so special, is the fact that we have heart and soul and people see that through our exhibits, and I think once you have those things achieved, and then you can start to implement more of the education, the engagement, and the expansion, because the work that we do...yes, we understand we're supposed to educate, but without financial stability and without people coming to visit, we

don't matter. So we just need to have those two continuous components always on people's forefront of their minds.

Q: What would be your recommendations for people who want to enter this work in this field?

Jordan: My recommendation is that you keep an open mind. You know, be flexible. I also think it's important...if it's for you, to max out on everything. So if it's your education, go for it, go for the PhD. If it's for professional writers course or professional development for leaders, take it, because sometimes it's just not enough just to have education, sometimes just not enough to have the experience, but you want to be well-rounded so that there's no determinant for you to be disqualified, you know. You want to make sure that you're in these conversations, and I would say the other piece that I think is so, so important: make sure that you find a mentor that is just as concerned about you reaching your finish line and your goals, so that you will not get deterred. Because it's easy just to give up, because that's, you know, fear does that to you. But making sure that you have a support group that's going to encourage you to make sure that you reach the finish line, is so important, and as long as you're falling forward, you're going good, you know. I just, I always think when you know, there's like a quote or saying about the bow and arrow...like, sometimes life pulls you back, but as long as you're aiming forward, you know, I always say fail fast, get back up, take what you could from that lesson, and keep going. Like, that's the only thing you can do, so that's my piece of advice.

Q: That's fabulous. We are here at the end of this oral history, any closing comments that you would like to make at this point?

Jordan: No closing comments, because you're going to edit cause I have, I'm really working on my "ums," so sorry, I'm sorry.

Q: No, this has been great. Okay, we will make this available to both my students and to researchers. We will be keeping it as part of the Margaret Walker Center collections but as we get the transcript finished, we will share it with you and give you a chance to look it over, too, but Dr. Ashley Jordan, I am very grateful for your time today, thank you so very much.

Jordan: Thank you, I enjoyed it. Thank you for the invitation. [00:40:36.00]