

My name is Virgil Taylor. I go by 'Al'. I'm a proud native Detroiter. My mother is from Birmingham, Alabama. My father is from Knoxville, Tennessee. As I understand, they met over in the area that would now be kind of considered Midtown. My mom wanted nothing to do with my dad. He pursued her for like a year and they met rather late in life. I have one older brother, Carl, who I'm very proud of – he's a Professor at *MSU [Michigan State University]*. My parents were remarkable people. My mother was very much into the arts and as a child introduced me to the arts and thus my love for the arts and being an artist myself. And so my family always had me involved. My uncle, my favorite uncle, Uncle Milt, was involved in Motown in the early days. He actually was the Temptations and Supremes first manager. And so my love for music, my affinity for music, I think, comes from my involvement with him as a child. He was also very much an activist and he had some other affairs that I won't go into at this point... But, I had a very interesting childhood. And almost every Sunday I was at the *DIA [Detroit Institute of Arts]* with my mom or she would scrape together enough money, we would go to the symphony or we would go to the opera. But I was always at the *Detroit Historical Museum*, always at the *Detroit Public Libraries*... and so that impacted me as a child growing up. And I started making jewelry even as a child. Things weren't safe around me... her silverware wasn't safe around me because I would take them and make them into some form of wearable art. So I grew up around that.

When I went away to school to *Lancing Sexton* ironically, my high school art teacher was my cousin, Charles Finger, and he flunked me. I would have to say he had good reason to flunk me cause I was skipping his class. But yeah, he flunked me... but he was a renowned artist.

There's a coming together that did not exist. I would say even ten years ago, I know I have looked at myself and how I embrace other members of the community, other artists, other

business people, and the willingness of us to celebrate one another and to try to come together to work together.