



Siyabonana Interview with Shirley Weber

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“California has to celebrate its greatness, and Black Studies and Ethnic Studies is one of those pieces of greatness.”

~ Shirley Weber

Introduction

As one of the elders in the discipline of Black Studies, Dr. Shirley Weber’s journey from the classroom in San Diego to the capital in Sacramento shows how unique Black Studies is in the state of California. Weber earned her B.A., M.A., and PhD in Communications from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). She taught at California State, Los Angeles and Los Angeles City College before becoming a Professor of Africana Studies at San Diego State University, a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), in San Diego for 40 years. Weber was also the President of the National Council for Black Studies (NCBS), the premiere organization for Black Studies, from 2002-2006. After retiring from the university, Weber served four terms in the California State Assembly before she became the first Black Secretary of State

of California, a position that she currently holds. Weber is well known as the architect of AB 1460, the Assembly Bill that requires every student who attends any of the 23 California State University schools to take 3 units of Ethnic Studies in order to graduate. This historic bill, signed into law by the Governor of California in 2020, saved countless Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs throughout California that were on the verge of being dismantled and/or consolidated. AB 1460 was also the impetus for the passing of the 2021 policy requiring all students in the California Community College system (116 campuses) to take an Ethnic Studies course, and AB 101, the Assembly Bill, signed into law in 2021, requiring all K-12 students in the state of California to take an Ethnic Studies course. Weber recently put forth another historic bill: AB 3121, an Assembly Bill that creates a task force to study and develop Reparation proposals for African Americans in California. Weber continues to make history in California and throughout the discipline by applying Black Studies in the legislature, the community, and beyond. The interview questions were written by Aimee Glocke, (aimee.glocke@csun.edu), Professor of Africana Studies at California State University, Northridge; asked via Zoom on December 13, 2022; and transcribed afterwards.

*Glocke: Thank you so much for your time, and your willingness to contribute to *Siyabonana: The Journal of Africana Studies*. I know that you found your way to San Diego State University to teach. You were teaching at Cal State LA [California State, Los Angeles] for a little while first.*

Weber: I was a part-time instructor at Cal State LA while I was still in grad school.

Glocke: What brought you to San Diego State? How long did you teach there? And, what kind of courses did you teach?

Weber: Well, you know, it was interesting. I was actually just teaching Communications at Cal State LA. I had done one quarter and had been invited to do another one. I was trying to get some teaching experience in while I was a grad student

because I was a Social Worker working at one of the non-profit agencies in LA. Working part-time and going to school. The Chair of the department said they're looking for somebody in Communications, but it's a little different kind of thing. And I thought of you immediately. You may want to go to San Diego. So, I thought I'll check it out, and I did. I called and got an interview, and it was a different kind of thing. I discovered that it was a Black Studies program.

It was not just Communications, which was great for me because I was doing my doctorate on Marcus Garvey and doing research in Black History as well as Communications and Movement Studies. It kind of fit in with what I was doing. I knew I wanted to teach, but I wasn't sure if I wanted to just teach straight Speech Communications. You know it's a challenge to constantly try to validate yourself in every arena that you're in. My mentor was Molefi Asante [Professor in Africology and African American Studies at Temple University], and he had been with me since I was an undergrad and a grad student. I looked at it, and I thought, well, this could be an interesting experience for a year.

It's not that far from LA, and it doesn't require me to do any major movement. I decided that I would come to San Diego for a year to see what this was all about. To help them develop courses on Black Communications; how to fit into the Communication general ed model; as well as Black speakers, Movement Studies, and the Marcus Garvey's, and the Malcolm's, and so forth. It fit right into the stuff I was doing that I liked to do. What UCLA didn't necessarily encourage me to do. But, I did that. So, I thought, well, in '72, after I got interviewed and invited, I said I'll go for about a year. I knew I'd probably have to come back, I thought, because I was finishing.

I had done all of my doctoral work, which was really weird, in about a year and a half. I had done all the courses, all the seminars, mainly because people ignored me. They didn't know what I was doing. The faculty didn't care. And, I didn't know that you don't take 16 units as a grad student. I thought everybody did that. I didn't know what people did. So instead of taking the normal two seminars a quarter, I took four. I looked up in a year, and I had done all of the coursework. I had one class left to take, which was really bizarre because I'd gotten my master's in '71, and here I was in '72, having done all the coursework that I needed to do. I had only one class left to take.

I took two classes, one in the summer before I went there. And, then I had one class left to take that I took in the History Department with one of the professors who ended up being on my advisory committee. But, I thought I'd come just for a year. I knew nothing about how to organize a Black Studies Department; I had been in education my whole life. So, you know a little bit about education. But, really like so many of those who were there had taught a little bit here and a little bit there. But, really had not really gotten into Black Studies in terms of it as a discipline. And much more than just let's offer couple of Black classes and motivate students.

So we got into this whole issue. Harold Brown brought eight of us, I think seven of us, together, who were the main faculty to really hone in on the development of courses, and a proposal to develop a department. You know all that stuff had to be done the very first year that we entered in '72. We did it all by '73. By the spring of '73, we had gotten the major approved. We'd gotten the core courses there. You know, the basic stuff that we were trying to get. Some of it was already there. But, to put it together and push it through the Senate, I thought was an amazing feat for us to accomplish in from September to really April or May. I think it was smart on our part to do it because of a couple of things. Harold Brown, who organized it, was not a Black Studies person; but, he was a businessman, and he was smart.

He knew that the power of the institutions lied in tenured faculty. He didn't bring any of us, the seven of us, in as a program. He wanted to develop a department, and he wanted us to have the stability of tenured faculty. So, he immediately put us all in tenure track because a lot of times, these are started as programs. They have to ask permission from this department and that department to do a class. Then people get pulled off and go in other directions because they're looking for stability, and Black Studies doesn't have it. Then, eventually, whatever happens, the Senate decides to come in and turn it into a program with a couple classes here, and they save a few people, and that's it.

But, Harold was smart. We didn't come in demanding tenure track. But, he'd hired a couple of people who were already in institutions, like Eddie Meadows for Music, who knew the stuff about tenure track and why it was important. He hired Norm Chambers. Because Norm had been a part of higher ed in the community colleges, he hired Norm Chambers, and guaranteed him tenure in one year. And, hired him at a Full Professor rank. He knew the power that we would have; somebody who could advocate for us as a Full Professor who was already tenured. Who didn't

have to fight the battles of the institution and worry about their impression of him. Because the first semester he entered, in three to six months, he was granted tenure because that's what happens when you come in as a Full Professor.

When they wanted to argue about it, there's nothing to argue about. The appointment had been made, and that was that. I just came to San Diego thinking I'd be there for a year; you know, see what's going on. Then, I stayed another year, and another year, and another year. So, it ended up I came in '72. I retired in 2010. But, I actually left the university in 2012. I did 40 years at the university, and still continued to do a few things afterwards. But, when I came to the Assembly, that's when I really broke most of my ties in terms of teaching at the university. I had retired in 2010, and my Dean said I could retire if I agreed to do a couple of things.

One, I had to continue to Chair the department in my retirement because they had the early retirement program. So, I'll take half time. He said, well don't take a full semester at once. Take a half and a half. He said so all you have to do is basically Chair the department. He said because you make my life easy because you know what you're doing. And, two, he said, you got to take the kids to Africa every year. Run the international program. So that was easy. You know, no papers to read, although I read papers and taught one or two classes. But, basically asking me to continue to stay on. I spent 40 years. I came for a year, and spent 40, and never regretted any year that I was there.

Glocke: *We know that San Diego State is a HSI, a Hispanic Serving Institution. What do you feel were the benefits of teaching Black Studies at an HSI in California, or in Southern California? Then, what were some of the challenges you encountered while teaching Black Studies at a HSI?*

Weber: Well, the interesting thing is that when I started teaching, now 50 years ago, there was no such thing as a HSI. So, I don't even know how that came in existence. I know there was a HBCU; there were Black colleges. But, one of the things we did, which I thought was very, very important. Those who had started Chicano Studies, and it went up and down, up and down. But, those who started Chicano Studies and Women's Studies and Native American Studies, we worked as a team. We were not in competition with each other. So what happened was we even constructed

occasionally classes where all the three departments taught a course on culture. You know different faculty came in and taught at different times.

But, we decided that we would not fight each other over anything. A couple of times, because every time there would be an issue at the university, the President would come in and say well, we're going to have to consolidate the Black Studies Departments and put them together. It saved no money; but, it was what they had wanted to do all along. We refused. I called a meeting, and we met in my office. I said we're not going to play this game. We're not going to start the game. Well, who's going to chair it? Because once we start that, then do we have a rotating chair? Or, do we let the Latinos chair because they got more people than us? I said we're not going to play that game. I said, first of all, most of us have very little in common other than a common oppressor.

I said your journey from Tijuana to Mexico to here, and your legacy of having been here for years. All of this stuff is totally different than African Americans. Totally different than Native Americans who are here. We're not going to fight about who's the most oppressed. We're not going to fight over who's going to be, I said, because it doesn't serve us well. So, we organized our individual communities to maintain our independence. We're not going to talk about putting people together. We demonstrated to them that they saved almost no money because you still have the same people to hire. The only thing you save was probably a half of a secretary. If the university is in crisis, a half of a secretary is not going to save us.

And, then you'll probably destroy the relationship that the different departments have with their unique communities. We refused to play the game. We refused to do it. So, whatever the Hispanics had, and how they did it, we celebrated it. We liked it. We complimented things that we could do together. And the same was true with Africana Studies. The same was true with Native Americans, and the same was true with Women's Studies. I served as an Associate Faculty in all of those departments for their graduate programs. It was important that when we did things, like when we did our trips to South Africa, Women's Studies went two or three times with us, and took some of the students. We did a lot of LGBT stuff in South Africa. We discovered that they have a huge community in South Africa. The University of Wits [in Johannesburg, South Africa] basically has the largest archives of LGBT activities. We just complimented each other on the programs that we did, and we still do to this day. There was never a war between us, and we refused to participate in the

conversation. So, when we wouldn't participate, there was no conversation because the President couldn't just come in and do this. Plus, we had organized our communities to say that this is a unique group, and a unique presence for our community. We're not in the business of taking anybody else's stuff. We're working as a team. And, we did that consistently. Eventually, it got to the point where people didn't talk about it anymore. Because there was nothing to talk about.

We weren't going to talk about consolidation. We weren't going to pick the chair. I remember they had a meeting about picking a chair. I got up and said we're not going to pick a chair. We're not going to do any of this stuff. We are not going to fall into this trap. We are independent departments with unique histories. We share some things, but we don't share everything. Our community demands that we represent them without fighting about crumbs on the table when there are really major issues above. I would stop every conversation that was about anything of consolidation, coordination, all that stuff. No, no. We weren't going to do that. We weren't copying each other. It became really important that we built a relationship with our communities. They trusted us, and we trusted them. Therefore, there was no conversation about consolidation ever.

Glocke: *This leads me into the next question, which is about AB 1460. This bill saved so many Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs in California.*

Weber: I know, I know. I get many, many calls. I was on a panel here in Sacramento, and a guy was introducing himself, and he said, oh, and by the way, I'm a 1460. You created jobs for me, and this guy over here. You know, it was interesting to me because when I was at the university, we tried to get an Ethnic Studies Bill passed. We had a guy who put it together: Mike Davis in LA. When we got down to the day of the event, and people said come testify. This guy didn't even present the bill. He wasn't even there. I was just like how insulting this is. Marty Block was Chair of Higher Ed, and he didn't want to discuss it.

So, I said, okay, there's got to be a better plan on this. There's just got to be. When I got into the legislature, the first thing I was confronted with was Long Beach, Northridge/CSUN, and all those places because they were having their programs cut. They were being turned into no more than just a few classes here and there for GE.

The faculty were struggling to survive, and all these kinds of things. Then, the other departments were trying to gobble up their curriculum. It was just a nightmare. I said, okay, I got to do something to change this narrative. So, I went on a crusade. People think I just did 1460. But, when I first got in, one of the first resolutions I introduced was a resolution during Black History Month on the value of Ethnic Studies to California.

California was one of the few states that actually had Ethnic Studies Departments. And, we had lots of them up and down the state. We should, instead of attacking it, we should be celebrating the fact of what California has to offer as the most diverse state around. So, I put this resolution together. We had this big thing with Black Studies and Chicano legislators, and all these folks. [Maulana] Karenga [Professor of Africana Studies at California State University, Long Beach] came up. We had this passed; we had this resolution passed celebrating California during Black History Month. Then, what we did was we then put it on the floor for people to vote on. I just assumed everybody's going to vote for it. You know, they would for the resolutions. But, I was surprised at the people who got up and spoke on behalf of Ethnic Studies.

There were a significant number of members who said that their career, their success in school, rested on Chicano Studies; rested on Black Studies; rested on Native Americans; rested on API. Then, there were a number of white folks who got up and said I met my wife in a Black Studies Department. They were married to some Black woman, and they became a minor in Ethnic Studies. So, what happened was that it was clear this was a new generation of legislators. Most of them had gone through the University of California, the CSU [California State University system], or someplace, and had been disillusioned at one point, and then got rescued by Ethnic Studies faculty. That person motivated them to stay in school; motivated them to do well. Most of them became minors; some became majors.

But, they all really realized that this was a pivotal moment in their life as they were about to flunk out of college because of disinterest, and so forth and so on. So, when this happened, we had a hearing that day, and we had all these people come. After, it was passed on the floor. Every year, we did this resolution. Then, every year, I made sure that during Black History Month, I got on the floor and spoke about Black History. Why history, in itself, is so extremely important, and how it develops character. So, it got to the point where every year, I was doing the same thing. Every

year, I was bringing up this issue. People looked forward to what I had to say about Black Studies, and why it was so important.

I remember one of the last things I did was after we had the movie, *Hidden Figures*. I got up and said, during Black History Month. I said think about it; we are expending millions and millions of dollars to determine whether or not girls and people of color can do science. Here we have a prime example because we don't know our history. You don't know the history that we're spending money trying to convince people that they've already demonstrated the ability to do. If we had taught the history correctly, there wouldn't be a question about can women do science? That wouldn't be a question. Can Black people figure this stuff out because they did it. So, I constantly pounded that.

When I got ready to introduce the bill for Ethnic Studies, I already had people on the floor who knew what I was going to talk about. People who believed in what I was doing. There were one or two afraid and, you know, oh what does the Chancellor say? I said, well, we'll deal with the Chancellor because we had already worked with [Timothy P.] White to get a report. When he became Chancellor, he wanted to impress us. So, we met with him, and we said we just passed a couple of resolutions about Ethnic Studies, and this is the greatness of your institution. You need to figure out how you can utilize this greatness to expand it even more. So, he put together a committee of many of the folks in Black Studies, and that's when they came up with this report.

Then, he sat on it, and sat on it, and sat on it, and refused to bring it up. So, when we introduced the bill, part of the reality was because his commission had recommended that there be at least three units of Ethnic Studies in the state. He hadn't done anything with it. He just assumed that it wouldn't get passed, maybe; but, maybe not, and we wouldn't get it out. Then, we would find ourselves trying to convince the Governor or anybody else to follow it. So, they just sat on it. I mean the Trustees didn't think that we would get it very far. Then, when we finally got it out of both houses with some unlikely coalitions, we had a couple of people in committees trying to kill it.

Janet Nguyen, a Republican [Assemblywoman] from Orange County, voted to save the bill. She was my vote in the committee to get the bill out. So, we end up getting it out and getting it to the Governor's desk. Now, the main thing was, of course, then the Chancellor wakes up, and he's got to go on full press against us. He's got his folks, and he's convincing them that this is out of the ordinary. This is out of the structure.

This is not proper protocol for the legislature to be dictating things. Well, that's crazy. You know, the legislature does that all the time. They rewrite GE; they have recommendations; they have whatever. So, in the end, you know, we were pushing it rather hard, very hard.

People were writing and coming, and the state was mobilized. Then, I did meet with the Governor, and he had been given a whole list of stuff to say that they had told him. Well, what about academic freedom? What about this, and what about that? It was great conversation because we were in COVID at the time I had with him. It was really interesting because I answered every question he asked. Every question he asked. I said that is not true. Let me tell you what academic freedom really is. Let me tell you about this; let me tell you about that. He was just like, whoa, you know? And, he asked me how'd you learn all this stuff?

I said, well, you know what Governor? I said I spent 40 years at the university. I sat on every freaking committee that ever existed. I served in the Academic Senate for six years. I chaired every major committee at the university. I sat on all of the curriculum committees. I know what they can and cannot do. I know how they make rules, and then break them the next day. I know all of that stuff. I said the only problem the university had was that one, they tenured me. Then, they made me a Full Professor. I learned everything there was to learn. I wasn't jaded by the experience that I'm so wonderful and so great. I knew how to get things done. So, he signed it. I tried to tell different ones. When I was talking to him in the community, somebody asked me to go talk to the President at San Jose [State University].

I had dinner with her, but it wasn't going to change my mind. She wasn't going to change her mind. And then, the Chancellor had all the Black Presidents and Vice Presidents send me a letter opposed to the bill. They did, and I know all of them by name. It was interesting because I told them I know you have to do this just keep your job, and I'm not offended. So do what you got to do to keep your job knowing that I'm not going to be offended by what you say. If you do say too much craziness, then I'm going to have to come after you. But, if you're doing just this typical stuff, you know, this is not out of the ordinary. This is, you know, whatever you want to say. As long as you're not being offensive, I could handle it because I know why you're doing what you got to do.

And, I said, and it will not stop me. Okay? So, we basically pushed this through. It was interesting because once it got through, you know, it has its bugs and things that

people are still debating about this, that, or the other. But, they finally understand; and, I thought they did understand. But, when you're not in the battle, and you're coming in new to Ethnic Studies, and it's always been there for you. You don't remember the hard battles that are fought. You fail to realize that the most powerful thing at the university is not only the tenured faculty, but a guaranteed curriculum. GE requirements. I said they have saved Classics. They have saved all of these other disciplines that we see that have very few majors, but have lots of students. And, they have rescued them.

So, I said you will see the benefits. And immediately when the things started happening, and they began to realize this is now required, you got to have more people teaching this. You got to have a cadre of faculty teaching it, you know? So, as a result, it expanded the base. People were like, whoa, we got classes now; we got students. How do you think these other people got students? They're not that many History majors. You know what I'm saying? Not to have the kind of number of students there; but, when every student at the university has to take three credits, I mean three classes in History, whoa. That's a guaranteed job forever. You know what I'm saying? The same was true with many of the other disciplines where the people didn't have majors, but they had students. Why? Because the university believes in a rounded education and blah, blah. So, you're taking Philosophy and stuff. They're not that many Philosophy majors at the university, you know? But, nonetheless, nobody questions the use of Philosophy. And, why? Because there are jobs. So, we did this, and it's interesting to go to the institutions and watch and see the development. To see the new faculty at San Diego State when I was there for their 50th anniversary. To see all the new people that have been brought in where normally the administration would've taken advantage of the retirements and cut people. Cut programs; not do this, and not do that. Because when I left to go to Sacramento, they had decided to really not fulfill my position.

I was leaving, and they hadn't given us positions in years. We had to threaten to basically shut the university down, you know, because they were getting ready to just not fill my position. I said this is ridiculous. We haven't had new positions, and you know I'm gone. You're not going to give us one position? They had a little formula they used. You know how that is. And, it didn't meet our needs. So, we basically had to go to battle with the President at the university to ensure that we got a position. Some of the faculty, not in Ethnic Studies; but, some of the faculty in other

departments got upset that we had to fight the way we fought. I said this is the way we fought all along. The rules have never been beneficial to us, and we have to fight for every position we get.

So, I make no apologies for going outside the rules and regulations that you people wrote and demanding that we get what we needed. And, we got it. So, I realized at that point: I said, okay, what can I do as a legislator to take this to the next level? You know I've taught this for 40 years. I see the benefit to students. I see how it transforms kid's lives and gives them purpose. And, all students. I see this so clearly, and yet, we continue to say the same thing over and over. The issue, as I told the Governor and the Chancellor, that this is interesting to me. Having gone through the 50 years of Ethnic Studies, 40 years at that time, I said it was interesting to me that the discussions change.

I said because before it was like: is this academically relevant? Does it have good teaching? Does it have good research? Is it a sound discipline? None of those were actually raised in the conversation about Ethnic Studies. There was not a discussion of quality. I point this out because for 40 years, we focused upon quality. We made sure that our curriculum, we had to throw out some curriculum, that our curriculum was solid. That those were teaching were qualified to teach, and have their degrees, and their research. We made sure that they were doing research, and that we developed journals that were academically qualified and scholarly journals. I said all of that stuff was done to give the foundation. So, obviously we've got the foundation now. What we lack is you folks wanting to do it because it has nothing to do with quality. But, I also realize, as I pointed out to them, it has everything to do with the life of the university because of the fact that most of you know that when a subject matter becomes a GE or required course, it guarantees the life of that discipline.

Glocke: *What do you feel is the future of Black Studies or Africana Studies in California? Where do you feel like we're headed in the next 40 years?*

Weber: Well, you know, it'll be interesting to see because I've met a lot of the young people who are teaching, and they have imagined Ethnic Studies in a much broader scope, which I think is wonderful. They're going into other areas, and developing

disciplines, and impacting things. One of the things I am concerned about, and I constantly push, to make sure that this is good. They've done amazing work with Afrocentrism, and Afro Science, and this, that, and so and so on. Do not leave out your community because that is your salvation. I told them that more recently at the 50th anniversary because when you look at all the stuff that's done. No matter how good it gets, and how scholarly and how thoughtful and how engaged students are. If your community does not know what you're doing, then you have given away your only weapon that'll save you in difficult times.

The people in in the San Diego community; that's how I end up getting elected, obviously. They knew me as well in the neighborhood as they knew me at the university. I was equally engaged in the politics of San Diego. Equally engaged in the opportunities for African American kids, whether it's K-12 or post-secondary, whatever. That I was a trusted voice in the community. That is extremely important because if you're always crisis oriented, the community ignores you. But, they knew that whenever I showed up, and when I ever called, it was because it was for a good cause. They could trust the fact that I was going to tell them the truth and organize them appropriately to deal with it. So that's my only concern. As I look around and see; I tell young people, it's nice if you're doing this stuff. It's great; it's amazing.

But, at some point, somebody's going to come after you. They always do. The question is: when they call your name, does the community stand up and say, oh no, you can't do that? You know, you can't do that to her. You can't do that to that department because that is our department. So, I'm hoping that all of the efforts that people put into Black Studies at the state level at the CSU's, the UC's, the community colleges, what have you. That they all still have some sense of responsibility to make sure that they are advocating at the community level for the things that are right and just in those communities. And, that they organized programs around it. You know, we seldom did things that we didn't have our community present that they could be accountable for.

Whether it was teaching classes in the community, whether it was taking people to South Africa. I probably took a third of the people who went to South Africa with me were community people. Older folks who'd always wanted to go to Africa, and never had anybody to take them. And, here they were retired and walking the streets in South Africa. So, it is extremely important that we never lose sight of that. And, we do not forget that we are still a community-based organization. That we came into

existence not from the Ivory Tower itself, but from the community that demanded they change the color of the tower. And, we're still working on that.

Glocke: *We are very appreciative for everything you've done not only for the discipline of Black Studies, but for Ethnic Studies in California. Africana Studies at CSUN was saved by AB 1460. We were being dismantled one faculty member at time, and in a couple more years, we probably would've been consolidated into another department or completely dismantled.*

Weber: Just like everybody else, you know? [Maulana] Karenga's department was going to become a program. They were trying to get rid of him and, and a lot of the other folks. They didn't want to hire new people. And, they were just killing it off, like you said, one faculty at a time. Then, they were making you do joint appointments. We learned very quickly that a joint appointment just gives your future to somebody else because they make all the personnel decisions, and they can make or break a faculty. And, when that happens, it's almost impossible for you to encourage them to do the kind of research and the engagement that a Black Studies Department demands. So, you have to be very careful in that whole issue that's there and protect the discipline.

Glocke: *AB 1460 has also really allowed us to have those strong coalitions across Ethnic Studies. We have five Ethnic Studies Departments and Programs at CSUN. We are strong, and one of us is in trouble, we all show up.*

Weber: Great. That's wonderful. That's amazing.

Glocke: *We had that before, but not in the same way. We're working together on AB 1460, passing the courses and establishing the curriculum. This has been just an amazing opportunity for us to really take CSUN by storm.*

Weber: Exactly. And, like I said, you know, California should be proud of its legacy

of Ethnic Studies. The first Ethnic Studies Department in San Francisco. Many departments, like San Diego State, 50 years old, giving degrees. We've got students scattered all around the state. When we did the 50th anniversary, I was just so proud of our students who showed up and who came to the 50th anniversary banquet that night. They did a lot of the introductions. But, equally what was important is they talked about what they did. You know, what they did in their life. What kind of careers they were in. And, it was just amazing to watch this. I was in San Francisco getting an award back at the beginning of, I think, last year. I went to San Francisco to get an award from the Bar Association.

And, they honored me, and then they honored a law firm that has done a lot of outreach. It was interesting. So, these guys get up, and they begin to talk. They're probably in their forties, or maybe older. They began to talk about this person who changed their life. And, I looked up, and they were my students who are now getting this award in San Francisco for the law firm that has the greatest community consciousness of any other law firm. It was these four Black guys that I had as students in the university, and they were thanking me for that now. I was just dumbfounded because I had walked by these students in their suits and stuff; these young men.

And I kind of thought they looked a little bit familiar. But, I didn't know who they were. When they got up to accept the award, I was just dumbfounded at what Black Studies had done. Making them socially conscious lawyers that took this to another whole level of community engagement. They had a sense of community and a sense of responsibility to take this knowledge, and the skill they have as litigators, and do good work. And, are being celebrated by the Bar Association. These were kids in Black Studies who weren't even sure they wanted to stay in school. You know, so every now and then, I run across folks like that. I'm sitting in a room, and somebody will mention my name. I'll look up, and here's one of my kids who are doing some amazing work. Who is definitely being honored. Priscilla [Ocean], you know, she's a professor in law [at Loyola Marymount University]. But, now she's working with [Rob] Bonta [Attorney General of California] on some of the bills that I did. It's a dream come true. A dream come true.

Glocke: *And your legacy continues to live on through all of us. We're just so*

incredibly appreciative for you to take the time out to meet with me, and to answer some questions.

Weber: History's important. We know that. This is the story of my life. This is what Black Studies is all about. This is what I did, and this is the foundation that brought me to where I am. So, I'm very appreciative of what you're doing, and I thank you for including me in it. It's amazing. And, it's extremely important. California has to celebrate its greatness, and Black Studies and Ethnic Studies is one of those pieces of greatness.

Glocke: *Thank you so much.*

Weber: You're welcome.