

**Interviewee: Mata, Johnny**

**Interview Date: August 28, 2009**

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON**  
**ORAL HISTORY OF HOUSTON PROJECT**

**Johnny Mata**  
**Mexican-American History - LULAC**

Interviewed by: Natalie Garza  
Date: August 28, 2009  
Transcribed by: Michelle Kokes  
Location: Latino Learning Center, 3522 Polk, Houston, Texas.

NG: This is Natalie Garza and I am interviewing Johnny Mata on August 28, 2009 at the Latino Learning Center on Polk Street in Houston, Texas. Could you begin by telling me your full name?

JM: Johnny Navarro Mata.

NG: When you were born?

JM: I was born May 6, 1937.

NG: Where were you born?

JM: I was born in what they call Wharton County but it was outside of the Wharton city limits, which is really there were farms where my parents and then my uncles, they had farms in the surrounding area. But in the early stage, you know my mother died when I was about six years old, maybe five. Then I moved to Houston at a very early stage and grew up in what is called Second Ward where Navigation and Jensen Drive right in that vicinity.

NG: Did your whole family move to Houston?

JM: My dad, some of the older kids, I was the last one, were already grown and some of them had gotten married and some moved here and some stayed in the area. So actually it was really just me and my dad. I had a brother and sister that were young also

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but they had gone to live with somebody else for a while.

NG: Do you know why your dad chose to move to Houston?

JM: Actually I guess to be closer to his sons and daughters because a lot of them moved to this area. Some of them moved all the way to Bay City, Texas. I think a great number had relocated to Houston. My dad was married twice so when I was born some of my brothers and sisters from his first wife were already getting into teenagers or beyond so there is a big difference between my brothers and sisters.

NG: Do you know why he decided to move you all to this neighborhood or to the Second Ward neighborhood?

JM: One of my brothers lived here or in fact two of my brothers. Well maybe four of my brothers lived in a very small radius so I imagine that was the choice that I guess people consider immigration or migration rather from foreign countries but you know in minority groups or whatever, I've learned that they sort of seek some of their families or friends or neighbors or neighborhoods. I guess you could call it segregating themselves or surrounding them with people they feel comfortable with.

NG: So the Second Ward was a Mexican American neighborhood?

JM: Predominantly within a radius because back then there weren't really that many Latinos in Houston. Now, well I don't have to paint you a picture you can just travel but even in this part where I am right here was predominantly Anglo and then if you went farther down like Jackson Middle School in Austin they were practically predominantly white and just was a small number of Latinos going to those schools. I think that I went to Lubbock Elementary and it still was a lot of Anglos but maybe a little more Latinos because you would walk to the schools. So there was a heavy concentration of Latinos in

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Second Ward.

NG: Where did you go to junior high?

JM: Jackson is called now middle school but that was Jackson Junior High.

NG: Then high school?

JM: Austin High School.

NG: Austin High School. After that did you continue your education?

JM: No what happened is I started working probably at age 10, 11, or 12 selling newspapers and practically supported myself. My dad was an older age and my brothers and sisters they started having their own children. So I guess I became very independent and I sold newspapers like on Harrisburg and Wayside. They would pick us up from certain corners and take us and drop us off. Then as time progressed I was still in school and then I went to middle school. Then finally when I got into high school, I finally I was working and I worked at ice cream parlors I worked at different things where you would get off like 11:00 at night and then would have to catch two busses. I got home, well if it was 9:00 or 10:00 by the time you went downtown and transferred I wasn't getting enough sleep and it became harder to concentrate. What I did later as time progressed and when I got drafted in the military I finished my education in the army in Europe. I was coming back, when I came back I got involved in various community issues and I got involved in all those issues that I never did return to college.

NG: What years were you drafted when you were in the military?

JM: I got drafted in 1962. I took my training in Fort Chaffee Arkansas. I went to Fort Knox Kentucky to get armor communication training and didn't even come home because that was in the Cuban crisis and then I was shipped, we were taken from

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Kentucky, Fort Knox, Kentucky Louisville to Fort Dicks New Jersey and they flew us to Germany directly to... well we went to Frankfort, Germany and then I wound up in Manheim, Germany in an armor battalion.

NG: Is that the remainder of your time in army was in Germany?

JM: Yes that is where I served two years actually.

NG: So when you were discharged did you return to Houston right away?

JM: Yes I returned to Houston and I started working back at a glass business, you know auto glass and glazing store fronts. But in 1966 I was involved where a lady came into my section of... crossed over to where I was driving and I was in a truck and I went over and flipped over and fell in a ditch, a pretty steep ditch, hit my head on the cab. You could put fingers in my shoulder and my back. So I stayed in the hospital and got out and then had to return and about six months later I was in a 66 car pile up on the freeway. A blanket of fog fell as I was going up I got out of the car, you know it was cut here and double vision and of course hurting and just fell to a side because you couldn't tell where you were you were afraid you were going to fall off going off the over pass. Then an 18 wheeler gasoline truck smashed my car and left only one door, that popped open and the car was just smashed. So then what happened I regressed my recovery and I was hospitalized (in and out) almost a year. Then later when I was ready to go back to work, that was just to do light duty, I was hired temporary with the poverty program. The Office of Economic Opportunity off of the Kennedy and Johnson era, which was called the Office of Economic Opportunity and that was called the anti-poverty section and I went to work part time for them and I retired after 32 years in different capacities. Equal Opportunity Officer, I was in charge of a department with 10 managers under me. I

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worked in human service. I worked youth programs in what they call the consultant pool doing job development and placing minorities, training manager, training communities to empower themselves by having staff to do leadership training, how to become advocates for their communities. Even had, we would bring in the media to do role playing with live cameras and live reporters to do exactly what we are doing here, interviewing somebody and when they appeared on TV programs they would be prepared on the little time slot. What to say, how much time you have rather, and then call a news conference. They would train on how to do a press releases, how to go before city counsel, commissioners court and different things in government. Then of course being a part of LULAC, I mean later on I became... well I was on the board of Fiestas Patrias on the inception. Then I got involved in LULAC. Before I left the army I had just got involved with the Lions Club to be a scout master. Then involved with various civil rights groups which now I belong to G.I. Forum and LULAC but working with diverse groups to coalescing and sort of enhancing our, the old saying in "there is power in numbers." See and so that's what I have been doing.

NG: How did you get into the job with the poverty program?

JM: I understood they were hiring what they call scab workers and that word I can't remember what the word stood for but what we did is we went into the neighborhood to do surveys, talk to people, find out lack or need assessments. Then that was compiled, that was part time work. So compiling the need assessments and making the assessments and making the eventually they apparently one of the things I found was a need for employment. There is a difference between employment and meaningful employment where you, in the community action program what it means is to help people help

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themselves. It was not like a hand out. It was not a welfare program but it was a tool to empower people through a learning concept of empowering the whole community. So they were impressed. So I saw a need with the approval from management I started a job placement and job development. I would go into the companies part of the morning and certain days and develop jobs, come back and interview people and compare kind of match people for jobs. Especially at that time there were some apprenticeship jobs so they liked it well that I've got I was employed and then we developed a job development section and the consultant pool that also, between those they also had me doing supervising youth programs which we would hire staff to supervise kids in the parks, provide them meals so that... in other words to keep them out of trouble. Then later I became a center director where we would do... people would come in with needs and we would have what they would call referral specialists send them to, if they needed a lawyer the agency had what they call the legal service which was pro bono lawyers, free because they were paid by the agency, which is now the legal foundation. We also had a training center called I think it was called CEDA, concentrated employment program and they would have clerical cluster training and all that. So in between if the agency enhanced itself it had different components where the people would be channeled. We had the operation department which did community organization, organizing the communities into neighborhood counsels and going through the process where there was a lack of officers and that neighborhood counsel was a failure of needs. We basically, if you had drainage problems, if you had street problems and all that, so all of those processes we were trying to really impact by letting people know how to go before their government and schedule meetings with the elected officials. We ourselves were in the background

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just teaching people to do these things, even going as far as teaching them to do their own community garden, teaching them how to set up consumer co ops. In other words chipping in the money they would go and buy wholesale food and then they would buy from themselves as well as clinics that were established. I think the agency established two or three clinics where Congressman Mickey Leland at the time with a medical student, I believe and some others and they would mobilize community and resources and eventually open clinics for the poor. It was a very good learning experience as well it was involved with like LULAC and things like that. The agency would also send me to a lot of seminars all over the country, EO training and I participated in the Equal Employment Commission hearings at the Federal Building in 1970 where the Commission, well they sort of subpoenaed the companies to the hearing so they would report on their racial make up. We heard horror stories where they still had separate restrooms for blacks, Hispanics and whites. That was really the infancy stages of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which created different agencies to address the issue. Prior to the 18 whatever 66 Civil Rights Act and then some other Civil Rights Act but until this Civil Rights Act and some of them came at a cost of the riots in California and things like that that they finally, mostly for blacks in the marchings and all that, that the government and then President Kennedy formed these kind of agencies to... and you know whether it is perceived to be real or either a stop-gap just to quiet people regardless, it was a program that would help people, help themselves get into main stream because it also dealt with education. I remember the same agency when the school district I think cancelled or stopped free lunches or whatever, community residents picketed and marched against the school district administration which was downtown and immediately

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people were told to call off the boycotts and they restored the lunches. So of course all of this was done was a non violent concept. You couldn't work there if you were too rough or radical whatever you want to call it. But I think it gave me, I don't know whether it was a calling, you know the fact that I got hurt. I do remember that an experience that I had when I was in middle school, there was an Anglo guy named Sandy, I can remember that like it was yesterday, a husky guy, tall. I was a little bit taller than what I am now and there was Sandy Lufkin an Anglo guy, short guy, squatty and he was pushing him and just bullying him. Bullying had been in the schools since inception they are just now talking about it. I don't know whether I made a mistake or I felt sorry for the guy. So I walked over to him and said, "Hey why don't you leave this poor guy alone, why don't you pick on somebody your own size." But I wasn't talking about me. He ran back hit me in my jaw, knocked me down and I almost passed out and then he got scared and he tried to pick me up. He said, "Are you hurt, are you hurt?" I said, "Get away man, whatever." Then many years later I read in the paper and I think it was probably on TV it was the same guy was in West University a more affluent area in a car shot by with a riffle or a gun and shot a little seven year old boy that was playing in his parent's home in front of the yard and killed him. I remembered that. It has always stuck in my mind. So I don't know whether that was my first or real encounter with advocacy but it, just surrounding me there was so much passiveness in our community and I couldn't understand and I think that's why I would normally roll up my sleeves and speak up. That has happened in LULAC and you know I have been elected to various positions but I learned that you have to do your homework, you know you have to look for statistics, you would have to get an example of something else that happened, utilize the media

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effectively which I learned in a sense in what reporters to give stories to, when to call a news conference, how to put an example case in point and this is not that recently but there was a young child 5 years old in civil court which was a divorce case. The judge prohibits the parents from speaking to the child in Spanish, so normally people approach [LULAC] and say, "We have this problem." We have just had a similar case 5 years before or so in Amarillo, Texas where it was a male judge, Anglo that did the same thing to this family and we at LULAC, not only locally but throughout the state we raised the awareness and protested and media conferences so that judge had to recuse himself and rescind his order and I thought about that so we did the same thing here. We had a news conference but then I cited this case so it was publicized and all these interviews saying, "Well this is unacceptable." Then a motion was filed by the attorney to have the attorney recuse herself and then it went to the presiding judge asked her to recuse herself but all of those things that you have learned, you can have a Ph.D. and come out of a university but a lot of it is theory so what we try to do is move people to get to shortcuts in life and be effective leaders by giving the experience that we gained in all facets. Of course leadership, yeah there are a lot of egos and all this but the important thing is that we have to remember we were placed here for a purpose and our empowerment of others and to seek those that have the good skills, motivational, can speak motivational and that have very self motives and try to push them in a leadership role. So I'm doing a lot of that now. We have also been working on a coalition of a diverse groups, blacks, Asians, Muslims, Jewish now it is becoming more, in other words the goals that we are setting when people work together and start seeing how much they can gain as they go and so we are fixing to spin off. Then it will be in subcommittees and one will be the subcommittee

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legislative committee, one is to look into the grand jury system which in many instances have been very white which have lacked the culture and understanding that a lot of people that had allegations of wrongdoing but there was really not that much, they were not judged by their peers and they were indicted and they got a public defender's lawyer and when you have a jury system that you pick your friends to go select, or to come up with a pool of grand jurors that look like you. So we changed some of that but we also worked on, we are not home free on that, we need to change the law more, modify them, modify state and federal civil rights statutes where a police officer takes a life of an individual through excessive or deadly force, that they will know that they have crossed the line. They will be prosecuted. We had one instance which is the case of Eli Escobar, a 14 year old that was shot by a police officer. He was indicted. We did a lot of protesting, news conferences, etc, etc. His attorney and the family, his family came from law enforcement, Martinez from Corpus and the settlement was for not so much the judgment but they had to instill the Eli Escobar rule for training in the police department. When do you draw your weapon? When do you put your finger on the trigger? All of those things are what they call institutional change because you know you don't have to be a racist to commit a racist act. You have a racist institution that you need to change that environment. So from initiating driver's license, utilizing driver's license for the jury pools so that people don't say, "No I don't want to serve." You know it might be a sacrifice to serve on a jury pool or a jury system but if one of yours is on trial and you will make the difference it is going to be a sacrifice for you but it will balance the scales of justice to the sacrifice of that family, they are going to draw all their money to hire an attorney but the system is so ingrained with antiquated laws or policies and procedures

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that that person is going to wind up going to prison. Then you have the children, the wife, who might wind up on welfare, who knows? So now is if you want to be involved as a leader, you've got to think about zoning, redistricting, voter registration, voter participation, housing, the banking institutions, the difference of the approval or disapproval of loans, how much interest are you charging? So everything by category is what we really need is an academy of leadership. Now you are not going to be paid for it. It is going to be a lot of sacrifice between you and your family but if you are going to get into a leadership you know there is an old saying that it had a bunch of ducks, "Lead, move or get the hell out of the way" something like that. I used to have that in my office. I don't know where that poster is anymore. Emiliano Zapata was the other guy that was a good example of how far, it doesn't mean you've got to go out there and jump from a tall building to show how committed you are and it doesn't mean that you go and try to create riots and looting and burning to show you just have to work smarter and have a plan and let others participate and let others get the glory too, because they like it. Sometimes you have to step back. I do news conferences and set up for people, Latino peace officers, educators, church groups that don't agree with the Cardinal that are closing their schools so they come to me. I say, "This, this, this is the strings you pull." Because again, when we learn how to use our purchasing power and our political participation, not just our registration power, our community is going to see more people on the boards, employment at all levels and bigger contributions from corporate America coming to our neighborhood, not just for a select few. I mean where you can buy your own rent, renovate your buildings, do schools... But those are the things I learned in the trenches that is not in leadership Houston or other schools. This is what we have to start

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doing ourselves, develop our own academies, utilize video and stuff like that. Then this building I was on this board, this building was going to be given to LULAC and when I had a meeting they said, "It's a white elephant. It will never happen." Some of our members formed a corporation and called Latino Learning Center and I served on that board from the inception. This is what you are seeing. This is not the city, this is not the county and this is not the state. A lot of the programs here pay for themselves. Then the thing is though, when we first started Frank Orozco who has cancer right now, he is a retiree, there was the executive director which is hardly getting no pay made those sacrifices. Collectively we went to corporate America. We were getting like \$60,000, \$80,000, \$10,000, and that is how the renovations and stuff like this took place. My part in the time that I served on fiestas patrias which was a cultural awareness thing, in other words, create our awareness and our contributions but at the same time so that others can, you know there are still a lot of Latinos, young kids out there that seem to be Hispanic, Mexican American or whatever. God made us one way and we aren't going to change unless you die yourself. But those are basically and now you probably have some questions I apologize for talking so long but I thought I'd let it roll.

NG: No, that is very good, thank you. I wanted to go back. The poverty program that you were talking about was that the Harris County Community Action Association?

JM: Yeah.

NG: That is who you worked for, for 32 years?

JM: The name changed to Gulf Coast Community Services but it is the same program.

NG: Okay. You mentioned that you were a center director for some time?

JM: Yes I was a center director, there was a center on Canal Street and that is closed

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already. Then there was another one on 75<sup>th</sup>. I was working there and doing jobs development and they saw that I went to the job over here and so they moved me. I had, I don't know maybe five people working under me that would go out in the neighborhood organizing and then take, do intake on the needs, on family needs and we even had some of the staff recruit cooks that would help people in food stamps or commodities, showing them how to cook commodities different ways. We had people would come in to sewing classes or whatever. It was just a broad area of self help, well I won't call it training but enhancing some people's skills. Then for seniors and youth in the summer, the center was open for arts and crafts, recreations and for the seniors the same thing. Here we have a program, there was a program here. I'm no longer on the board. I was chairman of the board for a while. It is a daycare for seniors and disability people. They pick them up on busses, bring them in. They play cards, dominos or just socialize. They are fed. The nurse gives them physical therapy, you know, exercise. They take them on field trips. They have parties. Here we also developed two housing projects for seniors; one on South Houston and one off of Canal that looks like a hotel, three stories high and that is for independent living. This is daycare so they won't be at home alone by themselves while their families work and then they take them back so they won't be in a rest home. It lengthens the life of individuals because they don't feel worthless or useless whatever you want to use. That is some of the things. They have paid staff to do that. So I guess you can't say you learned how to beat the system, because that is not the name of the game. You learn how to empower the community to be able to function in the general system.

NG: What were the centers called that you were working at?

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JM: Oh gosh I think it was named Lakeman and Canal Center. Like the one on Magnolia and 75<sup>th</sup> was called Magnolia Center, so they would normally go with the street or in some cases they would name them in the name of some important person. You know we had Head Start and we had various centers like that. Then some of them would be the address or the street or the name of someone that participated in the poverty program or someone that was an elected official that did a lot, they would name them after that. In the beginning we must have had about 3,000 employees. As time lingered you lost programs like the legal service became the legal foundation and taken over and things like that. But Judge Rodriguez used to work for the legal service. In fact, he and I have been friends for years. I really have a lot of admiration and respect for him and his family. There are a lot of things that you could do. One time I would dress real nice and I went with one of the legal service lawyers and he looked like, I had been talking to him on the phone, he looked like the dogs had chewed his coat and looked horrible. Well when we went before the Judge he said, "Which of you is the lawyer?" I said, "He is." He said, "I am." What it was, there was an elderly lady over here in Magnolia, she was in the neighborhood counsel and she said, "Mr. Mata could you help my boyfriend, he was 75 years old, had high blood pressure, married a young wife, she had a 15 year old kid and maybe one 14, which were like... I don't remember all the details. But when he went with the lawyer and I know the lawyer I would never dare mention him but they said, "Well how much can you pay?" "He can pay \$50 a month or whatever." So he would in the rear and the judge would put him in slammer. He got so sick. So I don't know whose idea it was but I told his lawyer, "This guy is real sick. You'd better put him in the hospital.... his blood pressure is sky high you had better put him in the

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hospital.” This guy was supposed to go to jail but they put him in the hospital and that is when I went with him. We went before the judge here I spoke and sort of the man had, he was handicapped with one had and after we got through the judge was so frustrated he said, “Tell him he owes \$50 and I don’t want to see him here no more!” The wife was still young, she was still working. She was in his house. Then I went to tell him at the hospital. Then he said, “Can you call the kids and tell them I’m okay?” So I pick up the phone and I call one of them. “This is such and such and I’m over here with your dad.” “Yeah so what!”

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JM: He said, “We don’t care,” so I had to go back but I wasn’t about to tell him that. He said, “Oh did you talk to them?” I said, “Oh yeah.” I said, “What did they say?” “Well they are glad you are in the hospital and you are getting treatment.” “Oh okay.” Probably that might have been the last I heard of his case. You know I would see him but not only through the program but through LULAC we deal with so many cases. I guess the self satisfaction is there but after a while you don’t even remember. I remember I went to Kelsey-Seybold one time because that is where the agency had our insurance cover us. Then I was walking to a clinic and this young lady stopped me and she said, “Mr. Mata you don’t know me but I know you. You used to coordinate in the job fair where we had 10,000 people to the agency and Texas Employment for summer jobs.” She said, “Through the job fair I was able to finish my school and I am now a certified surgical registered nurse.” She said, “I wanted to personally thank you for that.” I said, “That’s great I’m very proud of you.” So those are the kind of things. It may not put money in your pocket but at least the efforts that (not I but we as a community or the

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people that are doing this LULAC and GI Forum and whatever) is that you get rewarded way more than monetary and so it is a good experience.

NG: You mentioned that you did a lot of training to help the community become more empowered. Where did you get the experience to show them these things, to show them how to work with the media and how to...?

JM: Well I think what has helped me is the times that I have been in LULAC for 40 years, so you are looking at 40 years and 32 years and then we would put in, we would go through training ourselves. What helped me is that I was already doing these things and in areas where some of them were self taught but I could apply it and then I would bring in... I became a member of the American Society of Training and Development and in fact, one year I was given an award for member of the year because I was providing some things for the organization which was video taping some of the training. So I was able to apply some of my training and some of my personal experience. Through my involvement whether it was in LULAC (because I also did media for the agency, I was the media coordinator), people that I knew I would say, "Hey how would you like to help me?" "Yeah" and they would call the station and they would send cameras, different stations and you develop a relationship and a rapport with. I was developing a social service agency network, a coalition of organizations to meet to discuss even the DA, Johnny \_\_\_\_\_ which was a hell of a DA he started going to the meetings. After my job changed well that lay dormant because some of the other people didn't pick that up and I couldn't, you know you move up and you... our work programs have to be approved by a board of directors, just like anything else, any corporation even though it was non-profit and then you had budgets but those are the things that occurred. It's been

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an exciting ride let me tell you that. Now I retired almost 18 years and I'm still not resting any because I'm doing all these other things. So tonight we are going to honor Julian Garcia and if you are free you are welcome to go. Last night I went to Texas Women's Empowerment something at the Houston Club. They honor several different groups, I mean different ethnic persons. I saw a lot of people and stuff like that but networking, rapport building with other groups that will help in the long run. So that is basically the things that I have been doing.

NG: During the 60's, the late 60's and 70's the poverty program was beginning, why was it so important for people at that time to help the community and empower the community?

JM: Well there was a lot of, not that it doesn't exist today, a lot of discrimination how people were treated. Title 6 of the Civil Rights Act says that, "No person regardless of color or creed..." Baaa, baaa, baaa "cannot be discriminated by any entity receiving federal funds." How many people knew that? How many people knew how to go report it? Yet when you had an institution or an environment that minorities and women were treated like second class and, "I'm sorry we can't help you." Or they went to apply for jobs somewhere else and they said, "We don't hire blacks or Hispanics" or all that, those laws will help turn things around but you need to educate the public in that. At the same time you need to educate the public to get more politically involved in the electoral process to be able to elect people that were more sensitive to your needs or else they wouldn't get elected. We had to be careful because of some of the laws that we didn't get involved politically because it had to be non-partisan, it had to be educational. Not that things have changed drastically, but at least you have people more aware. They

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know what agencies to go to. Unfortunately under the last 8 years under the Bush administration there has been a regression on civil rights enforcement. They put people that their reports you will find under the Bush administration by a group of former people in the justice department and agencies like that, that are now given reports of that they would appoint people that were more concerned with turning back the clock and look at reverse discrimination cases like this recent one that Supreme Court Justice Sotomayor ruled on the request by the city on the firefighters that they would stand a chance of getting sued by the black firefighters on the tests and that is a real tricky one. Now you have a five to four court and in her ruling, well it really is not overturned but it put a new face on race since the Bakke case and all of those things. What we now need to be smart enough is that we are not there and we need to know that our work is harder based on what is happening. The Regan administration put a lot of conservative judges in all levels of the court system. So then we in ourselves need to be able to utilize a computerized systems at all levels with different various groups to be able to do intake and be able to have good solid cases that we can take to the court rooms or have cases that we can testify when the clock starts going the other way. Now that you have Obama and things are changing, but you know its people need to understand you don't get a free ride. You have to work for your cases and you have to not give false solutions to the public. You need to be up front and say, "Look your case makes it a little more difficult but if we look at a class action and then we need to see which way we go." In the city of Houston's affirmative action program has been challenged and we had whites, blacks, Hispanics and others fighting referendums to do away with this and do away with that. So those that are in senior status or moving towards that way need to be able to

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communicate and have that foundation and leave a foundation when we are gone where you know you are still able to I guess educate or create that environment of awareness so that, you know we don't lose our gain because the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment, the 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment, the 1<sup>st</sup> amendment... they haven't changed. The philosophy and the role of the judges and then people elected officials that want to get elected by terrorism, by immigration, all of those hypocritical hysteria that is created that is just like they created in health care. That is orchestrated. There might be some things that need fine tuning but definitely we need it, especially our people. I was in Commissioners court on Tuesday to testify in the 287G what law enforcement does immigration work to tell them why this works against us. But before we got to the public they were talking about Harris County Hospital District wants to purchase Memorial Hermann on Southwest Freeway so that they have more indigent care in that area but they are also going to be relying on Social Security and all that. But one of the commissioners he was Constable a law enforcement agency, \_\_\_\_\_ is his name, he tagged it and he wants studies showing that there are people that, you know, in this county and this city still think that the people that are down and out, that we shouldn't be messing with them, mental health, drugs, addiction, homeless some of these things. Some people don't want to hear about it. But if they ever fall in that category, somebody has to do the fighting for them. It's not just a matter of the color of your people. It is a matter of human being that are people that do not deserve to be treated for political or economic reasons. So that is probably going to be another fight. So when I see those things I come back and I say, "Look these are the issues that are coming up. The school district, Dr. Saavedra left. They already had six schools that were going to get assistance and then the chairman, I mean the president of the school

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board took them off the agenda and only left a couple of them. All kind of hell, the parents started calling over there. That is another issue, Dr. Saavedra had promised these people they would be taken care of. Now they have one person and he's been there a long time. He was also a consultant for CF, the alternative schools. He was on the board here, they have been given money to that. That is another fight, another issue that we, the percentage of Latinos and blacks and others in the Texas prisons... not all of them are there because they committed a crime it is because of the criminal justice system and then the schools. They don't have to have drugs. They don't have to be violent. They don't have to be disruptive in the classroom or things like that. They get sent there because the system instead of having a safety net it becomes an economic development issue. The alternative schools get paid to take these kids. The allegations are that a lot of these kids are not returning back to school they are dropping out. There is a case in court right now related to that. I would rather not dwell on it because still a decision needs to be made. LULAC has won a summary, LULAC sued the Texas Democratic Party under a two step process of selecting delegates to the national convention. They were diluting the Latinos because it dealt with past participation on the electoral. So your Latinos, irregardless of your numbers had less delegates and so the judge ruled in LULAC's favor. Now we can probably take it to the justice department and see if it needs clearing under Section 5 of the Civil Rights Act. So that means that even though the Latinos were the shift in Obama winning in some key states, that is also going to empower us in Texas furthermore. We are making inroads but they are not easy battles. They are costly and leadership. You can't just wake up and say, "I want to be president of this, president of that" but you can lead. You might have the academic credentials, you might be a lawyer, it doesn't matter

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who you are. It is a matter of developing leadership. It will make it easier to gain and regain more rights and economic development whatever. The Hispanic Chamber is doing a hell of a job. They have Laura Murillo the secretary director, I remember when she was doing the media for me back when I was state director or district director. She now has a Ph.D. out of U of H and heads it, quadruple is the number of the membership since her tenure. I'm very proud of her. So these are the things that we look at. Regardless if you are a man or woman, can you lead? Do you know how to lead? Do you know where you are taking us? Whether you are elected, appointed or whatever because sometimes we get people in key places but they do more harm que los bolillos. At least we know where some people are coming from. It's not just bolillos I'm talking abstract. But the community action program, going back to what we were talking about and I'm getting long winded. It did not achieve what it was supposed to 100%. But you never get 100% on anything. Some of the shortcomings that I saw, some of my colleagues mentality was that you are another bureaucratic social agency and you have to establish your rules rather than say, this is not about you, this is about empowering the community. So from those parts, in many instances we failed to do a better job but we did good but good is not enough. You know you want at least a B+ and I don't think we were there. But then you had board power struggles. You had game playing and gosh you know sometimes you get up in the morning and say, "Well it's another day, we've just got to try harder." That's not just in the poverty program, that's everywhere, even in the church. I was called by Hispanics when they had basically taken over the church that the elders, in one sense of where it used to be a majority rule or where the Anglo community was the majority. They didn't want to let loose in control of the church of the bingos and all of

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that and they felt that they were being, they might have the numbers but there was a power struggle where they didn't feel welcome because the, los viejitos Americanos didn't want to let go. So I even went to the chancery to talk about it. You know if we can get it wrong in religion it's not good but it was interesting. I know that one Bishop got real mad at me because I was laughing about it. I was displeased on the march on the minimum wage for Latinos... for people in Texas. I went with him and the Bishop said something and I was laughing at his tunnel vision in the community. Here you are talking about religion and we are talking about community. When I laughed, he said, "Look Father Gonzales he is laughing at me." I said, "No Bishop I'm sorry I'm not laughing at you. I'm just, I just don't agree with what you are saying." That made it even worse.

NG: Your involvement with civil rights, do you think it happened because of the job that you got or were you very interested in civil rights and injustices before you got the job at the poverty program?

JM: Say that again.

NG: What made you have an interest in the civil rights?

JM: The injustice that I saw, whether it was in a trial of an individual or whether an employment in the class or individuals getting discriminated against in employment. In fact, I go back to this corporation where we might reinstate this guy that was terminated for yet another person committed bigger, I'll use the words "problems" than he did, they are still there and he is terminated. He has been there longer than the other folks, so we question it and we are going to go back to get a response from the president of the company.

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NG: Is that something that you are noticing injustices, is that something that happened as an adult or while you were young as well?

JM: Both.

NG: Can you think of an example when you were young, aside from the bullying?

JM: Well you could walk into a department store and all you saw was whites in sales. The police departments, mostly whites, LULAC has fought those battles. LULAC got the first Hispanic, Roy Martinez which was 6 foot something into the police department and then they got his brother that was the same size and size was an issue. You had to be 5 foot 7 or something and a lot of the Latinos, and in some instances we didn't lower the qualification, we have... they used military experience being serving in the military as part of the requirement to get into but before you could see it. You could see it, you know anywhere you went. I remember in Rosenberg, Texas I went with my cousins, we went to a movie. The Hispanics had to sit in the balcony con los negros and then when we were... I said, "Man I'm thirsty. Let's go in here I tried to open the door to go in this restaurant." "Oh no, no you've got to go to the back." My primos were conditioned that way, Latinos were conditioned like that. "You can't do that. You've got to be respectful," respectful while being discriminated! Or when you were in school the counselor would sit down and tell you, "You'll never make a lawyer. You know but you have good dexterity in your hands you could be a body man, you could be a carpenter. Lawyers don't work with their hands they work with their heads." How in the hell can you tell what is in my head and my abilities? But that is what we were told when we were in school. They send you to metal shop. They send you to whatever. Well many parents then would say, "You've got to get the best education" and yes but there was a

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conditioning of our communities then. There was a condition because there was discrimination or ignorance or whatever it was, it was wrong. My supervisor when I was away, he said, "You know blacks can never be a quarter back." I said, "Why?" They were hardly even in the football games. "They don't have the capacity that we do." That's what they thought. So if they were talking about the blacks, what the hell did they think about you as a Latino? You see? Now today we have Mexican Americans who are born US citizens Latinos and blacks that are doing the same thing to the little immigrant kids that come from Mexico. Yet you look at some of their IQ's, they come and learn the language like "this" and then they get into the university and some of them are more ambitious than when we were going to school and a lot of my colleagues, I told you I worked my way through school. A lot of my colleagues said, "Oh man I'm going to be cool. I'm going to quit the job and get a construction job with my brother because I want to buy me a new car and good clothes so I can have all kinds of girlfriends." Man I thought about one day I want to get married. I want to have children and I need to have an education so that I can educate my kids. That was real. I didn't... nobody told me that. I experienced it in my neighborhood. You know it was about being cool, having fun and it reminds me of one story that I tell kids when I go speak to the schools. I've done forgot the story but it's about the grasshopper. Grasshopper had a fiddle. All that summer he was out there fiddling, enjoying life and the squirrels were out there picking up nuts and putting them away and all the little animals getting ready for the winter. They said, "Hey man you'd better get with it... it's coming." "No I'll make it." Then the snow starts falling and then the little animals went to their little caves, whatever they had, the ants and all that. The fiddler couldn't fiddle anymore because it was freezing. He

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went and said, "Hey let me come in!" They said, "We don't have enough food and this hole is too small for you to come in." So I immediately said that some of the kids, of course I was more polished and I tried to do a little research. You would be surprised how many listened to that because they started asking questions. When I went to Cesar Chavez school I went to career days and I talked to them about civil rights and they started asking a lot of questions. If I went and talked about my role in the media for LULAC or GI Forum or whoever, they listen. They say, "How can I get in the media?" "Well you've got to do this, this, this." I hardly ever tell anybody I'm a drop out. Not because I'm ashamed because I know why I dropped out. Because I don't want them to use the same excuse to drop out of school, get a GED, go get a job or saying I'm going to take a short cut to education, just like I hear them, "Oh I'm going to college." "Oh really which college are you going to?" "I'm going to...medical technician." Pay all this damn money instead of going to the university and getting your degree. I have a problem with some of these schools. But my point is that it's not... there's a lot of people that I know that are very proud of what I have done. But again, it's not about me it's about future generations. So I don't go advertise, "Yeah I'm a drop out but look where I'm at now." You don't have to say it. You don't have to lie about it. If you ask me and I told you but I'm not going to advertise it because some people think I'm an attorney, some of the kids. Some of them say, "What station do you work for?" I had two little girls one time that said, "Man that's the guy on Channel 45." Well when I have a news conference they carry it.

NG: I read in the two page write up that you sent me that you believe that leaders were not created but developed through the values that they bring to the situations that they

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come from.

JM: Leaders are born with certain attributes but you have to develop them. They are developed... let me give you an example. Ted Kennedy, not buried yet. He died, he was in an accident and a woman died and had to deal with that. Later he is accused of being a womanizer and all that. Then he meets this woman, got married and he lost a presidential election. That was one of his best speeches. But he has done more in the senate, served more times, has been able to work on both sides of the aisle. The Kennedy clan were born with good attributes but there were circumstances of his life that prepared him and him having that ambition, he was able to do much more. But there were some valleys in some parts of his life that he was able to overcome because not everyone overcomes.

NG: What circumstances or situations do you think you have faced that have made you into the person that people come to?

JM: I guess those major accidents, the car wrecks that you are not working, you are unable to do certain things and then I had surgery not too long ago with cancer. I have had several surgeries. You reach sometimes there are peaks and valleys and on some of those valleys you don't know how much longer you are going to be. What can I do to contribute? But you have to keep your... you know you need to continue to be optimistic about things. But I think things that occur in your lifetime can also help you see things more clear when people come that need help. You have to distinguish between the needs in those that are out there just to grab. You know you have to sometimes see through people. Through what I have gone through I have been able to be a fair judge of people and their needs when they are really sincere or whatever. Those things you have to prepare and learn them. I have seen people with real hard cases. Just the other day I

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came to take some pictures for *La Voz* because they are doing a story or my profile. I don't know if it will come out in September but, so I was driving, I got on the elevated freeway to the house and then I saw a young couple with a little girl, baby girl, walking in the hot sun and there is this white Cadillac and that was their car. They were driving that car, eran Latinos, so I slowed down and pulled in front of the car and I noticed an old truck had pulled over too and when they saw me pull over they left. So they come running to where I was and I said, "Get in what happened?" They said, "We ran out of gas," a young couple with a little girl. It looked like it was kids having kids. Then I said, "Okay I'm in a hurry because I've got people waiting on me but I'm going to help since you need gas." So I drove to Houston Avenue, got off on Houston Avenue on that exit came back and went to the Phillips station. I had to buy the tank and put gas and then I went back around here to Scott and got in and just as I was getting to their car the wrecker was already hooking it up to take it. So the guy got out and he said, so I got over to the wrecker and I said, "Well..." I introduced myself. He said, "You are with LULAC?" I said, "Why?" "Well I haven't heard from you in a long time." I said, "Well listen, these folks they ran out of gas I took them over." He said, "Yeah we had two wreckers looking for them." The little baby was sick, she had been throwing up. She said they were walking back to the car because it was so hot. I just felt I was in the right place at the right time and they needed help. Now what are you worried about? Suppose the police would have stopped, suppose they had drugs in your car. A lot of people say, "Well I don't want to get involved because I don't know what kind of people they are. They are dressed like kids you know. Then you are going to say, "Well they might belong to the gang." I didn't think anything. I saw a little girl, I saw a couple in trouble

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and I went for it. Whatever the circumstances are I don't care it is just that they were in trouble and needed help. They were in a real hot, where the degrees where people can get sick. Well the baby was already sick. Then she said, "Oh you are Johnny Mata. My sister has been looking for you. We called everywhere." I said, "Well it ain't my fault I'm listed," I said, "You call the LULAC office and I can't take all the calls." Well her husband got killed by a police officer and bla, bla, bla.." I said, "Well I'll give you my email you send me whatever your sister has and I'll look at it and I'll give it to somebody or whatever." When the girl was going to get in by herself with a child she told her husband, "I'll go get the gas you wait here." I said, "No ma'am let him come in here." I said, "Don't you ever," I didn't chew her out I said, "Don't you ever go by yourself please. Because you don't know what kind of people you are dealing with." So I took him with me. It's better that the car get towed away then she gets towed away. Then you don't know what would happen with her and her child. Those are experiences that they don't know. They are so uptight about what is happening to them immediately they are not thinking about what other things can happen as a result. But you know I mean everybody does deeds, everybody does deeds. The thing is I think when you really look at what surrounds you and you are saying, "Well I want to make a better world when I'm gone. I want to be able to have done something while I was here." I guess that is a good answer.

NG: What kind of work did you do at the American GI Forum?

JM: No I'm a member off GI Forum I'm now doing their media for them too. I'm in the recent history because of veterans coming here and they are not respected like they should, we have a lot of them that are on the street that are homeless. They have suffered

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psychological problems that are now creating divorces and homeless and addicted and they are, you know if somebody doesn't want help you can't help them. So we have got to find ways. So I'm doing more for GI Forum to create that awareness of the need and to create the awareness to the veterans that they need to come out and ask for help. There is help but we are also working to improve the help that is lacking.

NG: In the past what has the GI Forum worked for?

JM: Same thing. Not only for, if you look at the history of GI Forum, Dr. Garcia, the founder in Corpus Christi in 1948, he was a physician and when he came out of the service he saw all those things that the deprivation of the especially the Latino soldiers. There was one soldier that was brought from the war and they didn't want to bury him in the white cemetery. They didn't want to view the body. It's called the Three Rivers. The GI Forum got involved and he is now resting in Arlington Cemetery. Even today they want to name a post office under his name in Three Rivers and that community is still fighting it, they don't want it. They say it brings memories of scar. They are just prejudice period. That hasn't gone away. We are still here.

NG: With LULAC how did you get involved with LULAC?

JM: Oh some people wanted me to, you know, invited me and finally Mamie Garcia became the first district director, female, and I got involved and they named me civil rights chair and I got involved. Then I saw that it was a good vehicle to help people and I've been involved every since.

NG: The activities that LULAC is involved with and the injustices that they pursue to make better, has that changed over time? I mean has the activities been more in the early stages than it is now?

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JM: No I think we advance our approaches, our strategies. We have been able to...

End of Tape 1, Side 2

JM: I think LULAC has been able to deal with the issues you might use some of the same strategies but I think you can become more sophisticated in your approach. The sad part about it is that as time evolves the issues, for example, with the depression or and the economy situation where jobs are lost and all of that and they are going to blame somebody and normally it is minorities, Latinos. 9/11 Muslims but it impacted Latinos, it impacted blacks. Our new laws that you have to prepare to fight in the courts and through the legislation and through the litigation, legislation coalesce into change. You have to become more sophisticated in utilizing the media to kind of balance the perception of Latinos. We have had to fight with producers in the movie industries so that we are not just displayed as prostitutes and pimps and gangsters. You know we need for them to portray us in the positive roles: the judges, the attorneys and that in and of itself is a fight. We are not home free we've still got problems but there has been a lot of improvement in all those areas. I don't think that the role of LULAC is going to end soon because like I told you, you make your gains and then it is like a roller coaster and then you have to live to fight another battle. You have to live another day to fight a new battle.

NG: What are some of the major victories of LULAC in Houston specifically?

JM: Well we were the Pasadena School District attorney and that was one of the cases if I recollect correctly where undocumented children could go to school, public school, and that's just one. We have been able to win some cases in redistricting. There have been issues on one important case that even before the board of education came out of

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Edna, Texas where this Latino was being not represented by his peers and a lily white jury, he had killed a man in Edna, Texas. That is when LULAC went all the way to the Supreme Court and they identified as a separate entity. LULAC showed in the court we are being discriminated in the schools, separate but equal (allegedly equal), separate facilities like bathrooms and stuff like that. All of those things were shown by LULAC in that case and then you had some educational cases. But the Board of Education didn't come until LULAC won that case. So that in and of itself, there were a Judge Allred who already passed but prior to him becoming the judge of the... he was the presiding judge, the big honcho of the Southern District of Texas, he dealt just like Marshall, Supreme Court Marshall, Judge Allred never became Supreme Court Justice but he laid a lot of the work in some of the LULAC, there was a lawyer named Garcia from San Antonio, brilliant lawyer that fought, that was one of the judges involved I mean John Herrera, a lawyer from Houston. So between San Antonio, Houston and back then, now I just gave you the case on the LULAC and GI Forum combined in some cases. That case where we have a victory on the Democratic Party of Texas, see those kind of cases that are developed, some that in many instances we have to do a better job when we do interviews in the media and all that, hold news conferences saying, "We won this case." So, you know, other people can become aware that they are surprised to find you are discriminated against anyone, monetary or whatever and so these are the things that we bring to the forefront. Then like the programs that I told you way before that are now in some instances federal funds have been cut. Like the LULAC Educational Service Center we had to fight, they were cut off and some were... now they are, in other words, they are eventually restored, let me use the word, in the schools. The different issues

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whether it is testing or whether it is discrimination and then of course trying to get more students into universities. So we keep on going. Then like we said we have to prepare the leadership to be better than the leadership before them.

NG: You said that one of the things that you think is important in educating the community is having them become active politically and electing leaders that are going to serve them. Do you think that has been successful with the people that were elected, some of the early Latino leaders that were elected?

JM: Was it because of our efforts or you mean?

NG: Yes.

JM: Yes.

NG: How so?

JM: Well in some areas, for instance, for example the various groups in Houston when several judges were appointed to, Judge Rodriguez was a good example. There were blacks and Hispanics that were appointed to key positions like Justice of the Peace, Constables, several years back. That didn't happen just because somebody felt good. It is because the demands for equality by LULAC and other groups, that is how it got done. It didn't just happen overnight by accident.

NG: So who were some of the people that were elected that benefited from the activities of LULAC?

JM: Well Constable Martinez was one that was appointed and then elected. Some of the other JP's when we fight every 10 years, the census comes up we want to make sure that people get identified and then when it comes in carving out the districts whether congressional or other we have to go testify, we have to get lawyers involved. We have

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to get our act together to show that, you know that rightfully so these districts should be carved in such a way to allow us to get elected.

NG: Is that why redistricting is?

JM: Everything here. Not because of LULAC that is just part of the process but because of the way that we have been vocal and assertive along with other groups to coalesce and even negotiate how the lines should be. That is how you get more minorities elected to government. Single member districts in the City of Houston was a tough battle, it took us years through a lot of participation of the groups. So we go into areas where there is no... there is lawsuits filed to do single member districts and that does, you have to gather all kinds of materials, witnesses and put it together for a successful lawsuit. The lawyers can't win the battle by themselves. They need us, they need others.

NG: You are saying that was already, that, that was a fight that LULAC won?

JM: We won several district, redistricting cases and been in there along with GI Forum and other groups.

NG: Can you give me an example of a case of redistricting?

JM: Well there are cases where there is in west Texas, the surrounding cases where there was no redistricting. Houston had no redistricting. There was a lawsuit that I think African Americans came on and then LULAC, when we got involved in pushing for redistricting. In some instances LULAC initiated a lawsuit and it was consolidated with blacks or NAACP and LULAC went together and then agreed to be part of the lawsuit. You bring in Southwest Voter Registration, you bring in the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and you found some of the more glaring cases that needed to be done, yet you go to

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Rosenberg, you go to Big Springs, you go to there is probably going to be a fight in I don't know if it is Conroe or one of them where we are looking at redistricting. So first of all there have been the objections of LULAC saying we need single member districts. Then you actually start working the process, you bring in the lawyers. Now that the census is being taken, now is a good time for even expanding the districts that Latinos have by coalescing and working for a bigger piece of the pie, so there are several on the books. I wish I could just.... The recent one I gave you as far as the delegates to the convention is a good example but we have some cases where, that are recent that have been initiated by LULAC. On top of my head I can't give you that but I can get them for you if you need them.

NG: One other thing is you mentioned a lot earlier in our conversation that LULAC, I don't know if they are currently working on changing the grand jury system or if it has been something...

JM: No, no... the grand jury system right now is that we are working with a coalition on the local level but that means that we would work in the legislation, we prepare ourselves for the legislation and then we work to try and make changes for a more fair process than is in place now. Legislation has been done, for example, to utilize license and voter registration rosters to get people to serve on the jury. That was done I think back in the 80's when we were fighting for those changes. So all of those kind of things are done through legislation, sometimes you do it through litigation. What we are preparing for is redistricting and after the 2010 census comes out and then we are going to make sure that we get more gains. So you take the local districts, the state... I'm talking about LULAC districts, LULAC state and then we join hands with other groups

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sometimes we have closed session meetings and people start drafting, “This is what the population shows and this is what we recommend, this is our lines.” Then we go testify before a house and senate hearings and it is a process every ten years. In other words it is an ongoing process that never stops. The issue on a grand jury changes and \_\_\_\_\_ we have been discussing that for several years. Now there are some issues that have come out that these groups are starting to get back and then we are going to have to say, “Okay we need to get these sub committees going, we need to get people in here and then we need to start preparing the changes that we want and go to the legislation when the next legislation convenes. You have to find friendly representatives or elected officials to file the bills to make those changes.

NG: LULAC has been around for a long time.

JM: 80 years this year.

NG: And continues to be involved in a lot of activities for civil rights but over the years there have been other Latino organizations that criticized LULAC for not being radical enough or active enough. How do you respond to that?

JM: You don't. You don't have to defend. 80 years is a long time. LULAC has withstood time and existence more than any other organization. All we say is we made a lot of inroads, we are not satisfied with what we have accomplished, we will try to do better but LULAC is a non violent organization. It is nonpartisan. In other words we cannot endorse candidates and all that. There have been efforts to try to make us become like a political party or an entity. We have fought it because we have to work with all sides of the fence. We can demonstrate, we can rally, we can have marches like we have done in the immigration marches. There is a rally... there was a news conference today

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that I didn't go because I'm here. But it dealt to stop deportation until we have comprehensive reform. But there are some LULAC members that were there. There were other groups to stop deportation until we come up with something. So I think we know what our sacrifice has been. We know our methodology. So I myself am critical of things that LULAC hasn't done. But I'm in the inside criticizing and making little changes. We are bureaucratic like any other organization. We are big, we have protocol, we have all those things. So I don't think we owe any apology to anyone. We are volunteers. We are here because we want to see social change. The organizations have different methodologies to working so we have been called... I remember when the Moody Park riots was... I was just incoming district director. The police department came over and said, "We want you to wear a black arm band. We are asking you if you would wear a black arm band, cross the police lines if the group that were causing the disturbance would show up" knowing full well I could have got shot and I was ready, I was home waiting for them to call. Hey you can't ask more than that! I've been to places where the Klan was sitting across from us. I've been to places where the police say, "You can't be there. We don't want you to and we don't want LULAC here and the Klan is going to show up," in Baytown in a rally during the Luis Torres protest because the police officer walked. So we are doing our thing.

NG: Is there anything else that you think is important for people who are researching LULAC in Houston, the history of LULAC that you think needs to be known?

JM: I'll tell you what, there are two things that the memberships of all organizations needs to increase so you have more doers and the community needs to become a bigger participant. That goes over more, no disrespect to your work, than research. We just need

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people to stand up and be counted and don't be on the sidelines seeing the parade go by. We want people to be part of the change. That is what needs to happen in all America for Latinos by Latinos, because we are not going to be around that long, me and others. We just need younger people to come in. Don't try to change LULAC overnight internally because that is where the fights come in. Come in and become a participant and get more people involved to do voter registration, to do fundraisers for scholarships, to do all of those things and to take and to bring out the vote on election day but we need the community to become, not passive, but to be participants, start registering to vote. That is the only way we are going to improve things. Make, when there is a big rally, show up the numbers. Not civil disobedience but to show that we are concerned. When there are hearings or where there are things, like when we went before commissioners court or city counsel or by 287G, "We don't want it. We don't need it. We are already being profiled enough." We need the community to show up and say, "What can I do?" Even if you don't know we will check. We will tell you how to go and speak before commissioners court. Even if you don't speak, just go fill the seats and go there early before the other people show up to where the only thing they see is brown faces or black faces or Asian faces. That is what the people need to do. Quit calling LULAC for everything and get involved yourself. Start helping yourself. That is the key.

NG: You think the history of LULAC has been to try to help people also to get involved?

JM: It has and it continues to do.

NG: Okay thank you.

JM: You're welcome.

End of Interview

