

Hilltop Stories Exhibit Quotes

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Re: Hilltop Stories, Visual and Audio Reflections Exhibit Quotes

Description:

In preparation for the exhibit Hilltop Stories, Visual and Audio Reflections I scheduled interviews with family and community members. The interviews provided an opportunity to get to know more about my family history and learn about the shared history of those in the community. From the interviews I extracted quotes that resonated with me and used them in a print transfer art Installation in the exhibit.

All the interviews except one were done through Zoom because of the coronavirus.

Quotes:

“My connection to Hilltop is with the people in the community, sports, music, and groups of African American men and women in civic organizations like the Urban League, in city council and the Black Panthers.”

“Hilltop became a sanctuary where you can heal because you don’t have to explain yourself because they know your name.”

“I wonder if there was a way we could change the past, if there was a way for people to keep their homes I wonder what the economic situation would look like for the people in the community now?”

“My family has a lot of artists, musicians and dancers and I think art is a vital part of our community, especially for children and families.”

“Why didn’t you clean up the community (Hilltop) when we were here, and make it safe for our children, and the young black women that were coming up in the community? Why now? So that’s the kind of thing that angers me, that you did a sweep and you cleaned up Hilltop and you did all these things, but you did it for someone else, you didn’t do it for us.”

“The community started changing once the gangs and everything came in, as a little girl, I could walk around hilltop and walk up to Safeway from L. street without any concern.”

“It’s important to not just live in Hilltop but be a part of the changes that happen.”

“I was born in Hilltop and I’m 64 and if I ever won \$1 billion dollars I will stay right here in the hilltop. I wouldn’t want to live any other place.”

“Back in the 1940s, they had a red line and blacks weren’t allowed to live on the Hilltop...until after the civil rights movement”

“Hilltop was a community that raised all the kids and they looked out for them.”

“I’d like the hilltop to be like the black Wall Street.”

“I think the homelessness is just so blatant in your face. What else can you think about when you see so many homeless people? Today if I could do something to help, I think that would be the one thing that I would do.”

“I also know when you have economic development and it pushes people out, even if it pushes the crime out, it’s just pushing the crime to another place because there isn’t a deeper systemic focus on how to actually serve populations in a way that gives them the resources they need.”

“The Hilltop, our home, is out here in the streets. I’m saying it’s an extension of what’s happening on the inside.”

“In the 1960s or 1970s in Hilltop there were at least two places we always connected, either in church or at school and it was like an internetwork of the neighbors and neighborhood.”

“Businesses looking for space and seeing Hilltop as an opportunity in terms of geographic location and customer demographics comes from a completely business standpoint. And that has never sat well with me especially not on the hilltop, where businesses should have a connection to the community because it’s a historic part of Tacoma.”

“ We can plan for the influx of people but we have to care for the ones already here, so they’re not willingly displaced, right?”

“The people center brings back good memories of closeness and comradery because that’s where we always gathered and young people had a place to be off the streets.”

“I have seen the hilltop, go full circle, and can remember back in the early 80s, there were gangs. The Crips and the Bloods were rampant. Three out of seven nights of the week you could hear the activity from your home. I saw that settle down, somewhere around the mid 90s.”

Special thanks to interviewees and volunteers:

Marissa Thomas, Michelle Mack, Larry Norman, Linda Ishem, Gwen Jones, Umi Wagoner, Necashaw Montgomery, Sandra Daniels, Darryel Neal, Dr. Joye Hardiman, Toni Tennyson, James Wilkins, Austin Livingston, Brenden Nelson, Theda Cherry, Sebreehna Essien, Chris Jordan, Alice Stewart Lavette, Lisa Whitmore, Karen Mitchell