

**Patricia Lamb
Narrator**

**Sara Ludewig
Macalester College
Interviewer**

**March 5, 2016
At the Hallie Q. Brown Community Center
St. Paul, MN**

SL: Please state your name and where you were born.

PL: My name is Patricia Ann Lamb. I was born in Chicago, Illinois. I was born on July 18, 1946. This year will be my 70th birthday.

SL: And you lived in Rondo, correct?

PL: Yes.

SL: And you still live in Rondo?

PL: Yeah, I didn't move here until March 18, 1995. And the reason I know the date is because that is my daughter's birthday. She moved up here a year before I did. She wanted to go to high school here. She had visited here because my sister lived here. She went to St. Cloud University, she graduated, and she never did come back. So, that's the way that that went. She came, she went to Cretin Derham, and when she left, cause she's my only child, I cried many a days and I said 'Why am I here? Lord, what am I to do now?' And I heard him say, 'You're gonna work with your community.' And that's what I did. And that's what I've been doing'. 'Cause I had start helping with work at St. Anthony, and volunteerin' with them, and I been doing it ever since. That put me in the community, out and about takin' classes. First I said 'You couldn't do it. You don't have any degrees, you're not smart'. But then I realized that by livin' here, I had a lot to offer. I had a lot to give. And when I got older, people get used to me. Because my sister said the people at church is not gonna know how to accept you, cause I wore flash clothes, you know, I just like colors and stuff. And then one Sunday I said, forget, this is me. If I wanna wear gold today, I'm wearin' gold. And ever since then they say to me, 'Pat, where'd you get that outfit?' And I say 'Chicago, Chicago', and they just accept me. I kept workin' with the community, and I also realized that with all the prejudices, and all the people

being...mmm...racism, and stuff, and I said 'They gotta know I'm black. Not by my clothes, but by my skin and by how I am...

And I felt like it was up to me to educate the people in these classes. And I did. That still kept me involved in the community. I taught other people, who was teachin' the classes, and I learned how to work with different people. In Chicago, when you lived on the South Side, that's all you really dealt with. But here, you see everybody. I know when I first moved here and we went to a Chinese restaraunt, and I see a white person waitin' on me I said 'This is it.' I said 'I ain't never gone to a Chinese restaurant and saw a white person.' They say, 'You in Minnesota.' Okay. And you get used to that.

People got used to me, and they got used to me working with Rondo. I heard people telling stories about 94 and the bridge, and the freeway, and the houses bein' torn down. But then when I get to tellin' them to tell their story to somebody else, I say 'Tell your story'. And they can't do it. I can't tell it for 'em, cause I wasn't there. But I will always try and make an occasion for them to tell their story. And that's why Black History Month is to put the emphasis on Black History. Each year, I pick something about Rondo to tell, and every year I invite the Mayor and he comes, and he loves Soul Food. I invite City Council. Melvin Carter used to be city council, and then we had somebody else, and now we have [unclear]. I love [unclear]. Who'd-a-think, that all of my life, being in Chicago and then movin' here, I just love this Asian man! He is so nice, he is so sweet, and he smells so good! I tell his wife, 'Your husband is the best smelling man.' And he comes too! And I put a program on. People sing, people dance, people do everything. And we definitely have soul food.

This year, we started out sixteen, they kept talkin' 'bout emphasis on health and I said 'Oh, I'm gonna do that.' We did soul food, that was the first time I had that- ya'll have to tell me when to shut up 'cause I picked that this year, so that we're gonna be healthy [Laughs]. But I really, really thought- I know how people are always talkin' about always eatin' healthy and how they exercise. I got them salad, I got them fruit, of course I got the soul food. Would you believe it, they didn't hardly touch that salad. Everything but the salad. At least I did my part.

This year was Rondo Lives Matter, to let you know that the people in Rondo still matter, and their lives still matter. Even the ones who can't talk. I can say how I fell in love with Rondo, not growin' up here. I can feel it in the building I live in, up at King's crossing. It used to be a police station, a Kiwana's, a ladies evening, a store. Across the street, there used to be a bookstore, a religious store. It was anything. But now that some of the tenants are from Rondo, you can feel it. You can actually feel it. That building was built on Rondo, although it's on that corner where everything has been torn down, that's still Rondo. The ancestors of Rondo are in that building. They're in that building. 'Cause when people come there, there's a closeness. They feel welcome. I make 'em feel welcome. You not just there for a meeting, you there for a meeting at King's Crossing, to make sure we stay there. And that's what it's all about.

One year, I did do Black History. Everybody been tellin' me you didn't do black history, you didn't do black history. And I said 'I didn't have the help of the residents.' And then someone did help me. And last year, the people are my friends, the people in Rondo, they volunteer. They take the day off of work. A couple of the guys, they came over, they move tables, put tables up. And other people came back and set up the tables, and the decorations and stuff. This year was the same thing, even though...One of my girlfriends, she travels with her business. She made sure she left Denver to be back here for my Black History celebration. And people just put their heart and soul in it. And that's what it's all about- puttin' your heart and soul into the community. Okay, that's about it [Shakes her head and smiles]. I hope I didn't talk too much.