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AQUATICS LEADERSHIP AS PERCEIVED BY

AFRICAN AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN

AMERICAN AQUATIC LEADERS

by

Ruth Ann Hood Wieser

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
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of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Greensboro
1995

Approved by

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APPROVAL PAGE

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WIESER, RUTH ANN HOOD, Ph.D. Aquatic Leadership as Perceived by African American and European American Aquatic Leaders. (1995) Directed by Dr. Dale Brubaker.   200 pp.

The purpose of this research is to investigate aquatic leadership as perceived and interpreted by African American and European American aquatic leaders. A better understanding of the perceptions of aquatic leadership provides important insight into training and employment of aquatic leaders.

The study uses naturalistic inquiry. Three in-depth interviews with four African American and four European American aquatic leaders are presented. Personal histories are reported for each of the informants; a cross-case analysis integrates the interview data and the framing questions. The interviews, personal histories, and cross-case analysis are related to the literature and discussed. The analysis of the participants' narratives identifies three factors which influenced participation in aquatic leadership. Those factors are: (a) influence of others; (b) availability of training; (c) on the job experiences. Three deterrents to participation in aquatics that were identified in the participants' narratives were: (a) the effects of stereotypes on the microculture; (b) the cost of training; and (c) the pay.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

An aquatics leader is an individual who is currently
certified and who works as a lifeguard, swimming instructor
and/or pool manager (Wieser, 1991). The training to become
an aquatics leader is extensive. A Red Cross swimming
instructor who is also a life guard (1990 materials for
Lifeguard Training and 1992 materials for Water Safety
Instructor) has a minimum of 80 hours of training (American
Red Cross, 1990a; American Red Cross, 1992b). Candidates
need to be able to swim a minimum of 500 yards (American Red
Cross, 1990a) and/or be able to perform a variety of strokes
and skills (American Red Cross, 1992b).

Many aquatic leader candidates from the European
American community appear to enter the Lifeguard Training
and Water Safety Instructor courses with a background in
either advanced swimming classes or competitive experience.
However, an aquatic leadership candidate from the African
American community appears to experience another path of
development. Although many individuals from the African
American community swim at a basic level, few African
Americans become proficient swimmers or show interest in
aquatic leadership (Jackson, 1991). Therefore, many African

Americans who do attempt the leadership courses are often
unprepared for the strength and endurance components of the
courses and ultimately drop out. The lack of appropriate
aquatics education in general and water safety education in
particular at all levels is reflected by the smaller number
of African American aquatic leaders and by the slightly
higher drowning rates for the African American community
(O'Connor, 1986).

In 1993, the Greensboro and Winston-Salem Chapters of
the American Red Cross helped me obtain the statistics that
follow and that are summarized in Table A1 (see Appendix A).
Approximately 30% of the Greensboro population that is in
the Red Cross chapter's service area consists of minority
individuals (or individuals who are identified by one or
more micro-cultures as defined by Goodenough in 1981). In
the Greensboro area that is served by that Red Cross
chapter, in 1993 there were approximately 250 lifeguards, of
whom 90% classify themselves as European American; 9%
classify themselves as African American; and 1% are
classified as other. Of the 120 certified swimming
instructors, 94% classify themselves as European American;
5% classify themselves as African American; 1% classify
themselves as Asian American, 0% as Hispanic, 0% as Native
American.

Approximately 23% of the population served by the
Northwest North Carolina Chapter in Winston-Salem is

culturally diverse. Currently in the Winston-Salem area there are 174 swimming instructors of whom 93% classify themselves as European American; 6% classify themselves as African American, 1% as Asian American, 0% as Hispanic; 0% as Native American. The lifeguard statistics for Winston-Salem are unavailable. A definite need exists within the aquatics community to understand the development of African American as well as the development of European American aquatic leaders.

The issue of aquatic leadership in the minority population is not a new issue. Several researchers note the limited participation of African American individuals in aquatics and make speculations about the reasons for limited participation. Campbell (1974) reports on the self concept of 62 African American swimmers from seven predominately African American colleges. He notes the lack of participation in swimming by African American youths at various competitive levels and surmises that the lack of interest is due to psychocultural influences. Carter and Ackland (1994) in their study of the kinanthropometry of over 900 competitive athletes from a variety of aquatic sports note that out of 52 countries, only one African country was represented. Lawson (1975) notes a lack of facilities that are available to inner city children in his description of a 1974 summer swimming program that utilized suburban pools. In addition Lawson states that the children

who participated in the program saw the staff as "respected Negro men in charge of an impressive project" (p.74). Pendleton (1975) observes that facilities are inaccessible, that programs are educationally inappropriate, and that employment opportunities are limited or non-existent. Folk myths claim that the lower participation by African Americans in swimming is due to a difference in skin type, an innate fear of the water due to being transported to this country in the holds of slave ships, or a lack of flexibility which prevents effective swimming movements. Other reasons that are traditionally used to explain this lack of participation include: cultural differences and biases that have hindered minority aquatic participation; facilities and resources that are either limited or not used in the traditional African American community; biomechanical and physiological limitations of the African American in the water; and the lack of culturally different role models (Campbell, 1974; Jackson, 1991; Larson, 1975; Pendleton, 1975).

Research does not support the notion that African Americans and other culturally diverse individuals are limited biomechanically for participation in water sports (Campbell, 1974; Carter and Ackland, 1994). However, according to the laws of physics, body composition (percentage of fat tissue to muscle and bone tissue) is a factor when learning to swim (American Red Cross, 1992a).

Some research indicates that, in general, the African American population appears to have a slightly different, heavier, bone structure than the overall white population (Jordan, 1969). Although this fact may explain why many in the African American population have difficulty floating (as do many individuals in the white population), it does not explain the lower participation of African Americans in swimming or in aquatic leadership positions.

Research is limited on the other socio-cultural and economic points. Pendleton (1975) cites lack of appropriate facilities as one reason for decreased minority participation. Lawson (1975) cites the cost of attending programs, inadequate transportation, fears about safety, and the unattractiveness and need of repair of the facility. Jackson (1991) cites the factors of limited access to facilities and cost of programs. Most of the swim programs that target the minority communities emphasize the pre-school and beginner levels (Pendleton, 1975). These programs are definitely needed; however, the opportunities that would allow the novice minority swimmer to continue his/her skill acquisition are limited. Although agencies in the community offer the higher level and leadership aquatics courses, those courses are aimed more toward the traditional aquatics market of the middle to upper class. Students from other economic backgrounds (both European and African American) are encouraged to participate; but for the most

part, they do not do well or drop out entirely. Jane
Robinson (personal communication, October 20, 1992), an
aquatic professional who has worked with the Winston-Salem
YWCA for 20 years, observes that:

> "Through the Learn to Swim programs, persons in
> culturally different communities can learn the basics
> and can swim for recreation. However, these programs
> do not develop the level of skill necessary to be
> successful in the aquatic leadership classes. When
> these individuals come into our classes, they are
> unprepared and they simply cannot keep up with the rest
> of the class; consequently they give up and drop out."

Therefore, few role models exist who are successful in the
classes and who can provide aquatic leadership to the
African American community.

Although many reasons have been proposed for the under
representation of African Americans in aquatics and/or in
aquatic leadership, no one has researched the perceptions
and beliefs of either the European American or African
American aquatic leaders. I believed that a study was
needed to investigate the perceptions of both European
American and African American aquatic leaders on the field
of aquatics in order to obtain insight into both the
training process and the employment of aquatic leaders.

The study uses naturalistic inquiry. I completed a
series of in-depth interviews with four African American and
four European American aquatic leaders. The method of
naturalistic inquiry provides a means of studying the

development and transitions in peoples' lives (Josselson and Lieblich, 1993). The interview enables me, as researcher, to directly record the participant's point of view and to understand "the way that people think about the world by attending to how they talk about it" (Agar, 1980, p. 102). Thus, the context of the participant as defined by the interactions that shape the relationship between persons, events and the environment (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993) is used to identify the pattern of development into an aquatics leader. Naturalistic inquiry is a subjective research method. During the study, the interaction of the frames of reference of the participant and myself work together to shape the understanding and the results of the inquiry (Guba, 1990). The purpose of the research was to understand something of another human or human group (Josselson and Lieblich, 1993); as such the purpose was different from an objective research method which would serve to prove, control or predict events (Guba, 1990). Although the information gained from naturalistic research methods cannot be generalized across large populations, the results obtained from such a study provide an in-depth understanding of the situation that was studied and indicate trends or themes that may apply in similar situations.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this study is to investigate aquatic leadership as perceived and interpreted by European and African American aquatic leaders.

Framing Questions

The following questions were used to guide the investigation:

1. What leads to the decision to become an aquatics leader?

2. What are the perceptions of aquatic leadership for European American and African American aquatic leaders?

3. What influences on aquatic leadership are identified by European American and African American aquatic leaders?

Interview Questions

The interview questions probe the participants' perceptions of themselves, of aquatics, and of the community. In order to understand the self perceptions of the participants, I asked each participant to describe himself and his family and to tell his story about growing up. For the perceptions about aquatics, I asked each participant to tell me his learn-to-swim story, his aquatic leadership training story, and his aquatic on-the-job story. For the community perceptions, I asked each participant to

describe his community, to talk about community role models and to define community expectations. Interview guides for each of the three interviews are presented in the Appendices B, C, and D.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used in the report:

AF. Abbreviation for the Arthritis Foundation.

African American. An individual who identifies with the historical heritage and meaning attached to common identity symbols of a Black American (Fordham, 1991).

Aquatic Leader. An individual who is currently certified and who works as a lifeguard, swimming instructor or pool manager (Wieser, 1991).

ARC. Abbreviation for the American Red Cross.

CPO. Abbreviation for a Certified Pool Operator; a person who has taken and passed the NSPF course that provides training in swimming pool operations and management.

CPR. Abbreviation for Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation; a course that is taught by various agencies and is generally required for employment as a lifeguard.

CPRI. A person who is certified by the ARC as a CPR Instructor.

CPRIT. A person who is certified by the ARC as a CPR Instructor Trainer.

Crackin'. Colloquial speech that makes jokes at the expense of another.

Cruisin'. Using the car to socialize; generally involves driving around or up and down a particular street in a city or town.

European American. An individual who identifies with the historical heritage and meaning attached to common identity symbols of a White American (M. L. Veal, personal communication, June 25, 1994).

Hangin'. Socializing in a neighborhood; generally on a street corner, vacant lot, or someone's front porch.

LGT. Lifeguard Training, a course taught by several different agencies that provides the skills and knowledge needed to be certified as a lifeguard.

LGTI. Lifeguard Training Instructor; a person certified by the ARC to train lifeguards.

LGTIT. Lifeguard Training Instructor Trainer; a person certified by the ARC to train Lifeguard Training Instructors.

NSPF. Abbreviation for the National Swimming Pool Foundation.

Pool Operator. A person with the YMCA equivalent certification to the CPO.

Progressive Swim Instructor. A person with the YMCA equivalent certification to the WSI.

STSC. Safety Training For Swim Coaches; an ARC course that provides water safety training for Swim coaches.

USWFA. Abbreviation for the US Water Fitness Association.

Water Front Director. The YMCA certification for persons who manage outdoor aquatic facilities.

WSI. Water Safety Instructor; a person who has passed the ARC course that provides skills and knowledge needed to be a swimming instructor.

WSIT. Water Safety Instructor Trainer; a person who is certified by the ARC to train Water Safety Instructors.

YMCA. Abbreviation for the Young Men's Christian Association.

Assumptions

The following assumptions are made and are not included as a part of the research:

1. European American aquatic leaders are supported by a tradition in aquatics.

2. African American participation in aquatics is not supported by tradition.

3. The perceptions of aquatic leaders provides a means to understand cultural traditions in aquatics.

Limitations

The following limitations are recognized for the purpose of this research:

1. The participants in this study may not be typical of all African American or European American aquatic leaders.

2. The results from this study can not be generalized to all current or future African American or European American aquatic leaders.

3. The interpretations and conclusions in this study are a result of the experience of this researcher; another researcher might arrive at different conclusions.

Organization

The dissertation is organized into six chapters. Chapter I discusses the development of the research idea, identifies the problem statement, assumptions and limitations, and defines the framework for the report of the research. Chapter II reviews the literature that is pertinent to the research questions. Chapter III describes the methodology and the development of the data collection-analysis cycle. Chapter IV presents the personal histories of the participants. Chapter V uses the framing questions to investigate the aquatic leadership issues that were identified from the personal histories. Chapter VI

identifies the major issues obtained from the data and integrates those issues with the literature; conclusions are drawn; suggestions to enhance the participation of minorities in aquatics are presented; and recommendations for further study are made.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter covers a review of the literature
that is pertinent to the research questions. No previous
research has been done on the perceptions and beliefs of
either African American or European American aquatic
leaders. Pendleton (1975) and Jackson (1991) have hinted at
the role that culture plays in the participation in
aquatics. Campbell (1975) studied the psychocultural
influences on the African American competitive swimmer. He
determined that the identity of the African American swimmer
remained constant across the roles of self, swimmer and
African American swimmer. He further noted a positive
relationship between the swimmer and his family, peers, and
African American role models. Although no one has studied
the influence between culture and aquatics, the relationship
between microcultures, the macroculture, and aquatics
provides an important backdrop for better understanding of
the perceptions of aquatic leaders. A primary culture is
one of a series of microcultures that makes up a
macroculture (Banks & Banks, 1989). The African American
and European American microcultures are two such
microcultures within the macroculture of American society.

A macroculture is the "overall system of mutually ordered public cultures [that pertain] to all activities within the society" (Goodenough, 1981, p.111). The primary culture is that microculture that most closely resembles the macroculture; in American society the European American culture is generally accepted as the primary culture. Microcultures will share most of the core values/activities of the macroculture; however, there may be some macrocultural values/activities which are "alien in certain microcultures" (Banks & Banks, 1989, p.10). Aquatics is one example of a macrocultural activity that is embraced by one microculture (European American) and discouraged in another (African American).

Reflection of Primary Microculture in Aquatics

Pendleton (1975) points out that society is controlled by its primary culture through the allocation of resources and the decision making processes; the European American microculture has controlled the resources, and therefore the participation of persons in aquatics. Pendleton believes that the primary culture, or European American society, has controlled access to the recreational and career opportunities for African Americans in aquatics through the means of inadequate facilities, limited training beyond the novice level, and the perpetuation of the various folk myths. Jackson (1991) documents similar reasons for limited

minority participation in aquatics: cultural misconceptions, a shortage of facilities, and the need for encouragement.

The instructional system developed by the various agencies does little to alleviate this situation. Many of the learn-to-swim programs that target the minority communities emphasize the pre-school and beginner levels (Pendleton, 1975). However, once the student acquires the basic skills, there are few places for the novice swimmer to continue his/her skill development. Even now, when individuals from the minority microculture attempt aquatic leadership courses, they discover that they are unprepared and drop out of the course. The lack of African American aquatic leaders thus becomes a reflection of many of the larger problems in our country and of our education system.

The Effects of the Microculture on Education and Aquatics

Persons from a subculture generally have a different interpretation of community than those persons from the primary culture (Eisenhart & Cutts-Dougherty, 1991). This difference in interpretation creates the identity of a stranger when the person interacts with the unknown community (Shabatay, 1991). When individuals from a sub-culture begin to swim, they enter a world that is unfamiliar in several ways. Not only is aquatics dominated by the primary culture, but the aquatic environment is also

entirely different from the land/air environment. Research demonstrates (Applebee, 1991; Eisenhart & Cutts-Dougherty, 1991; Heath, 1983) that the closer the microculture of the student is to the learning situation or environment, the better the student performs. Sinclair and Ghory (1987) state that young children are trained in the home to seek and build on familiar aspects of their environments. At school, language, appearance and heredity can be subtly questioned or directly challenged. In addition, styles of behavior that are rewarded at home are often ridiculed and denied at school (Heath, 1983). When the racial, cultural or socioeconomic backgrounds of students (or student and teacher) vary, that different student gets caught in the middle. Sinclair and Ghory (1987) further state that a mismatch between the student and the instructional system converts into the student's own feelings of inadequacy as a learner, which affects his or her aspirations for further learning. This process is summarized in the statement that minorities have often been pre-victimized by circumstances-- little academic encouragement, low self-esteem, a casual insensitive environment, expressions of disrespect and downright hatred, and apparent attempts to diminish and even annihilate the personality of the individual in order to fit the more powerful supra-culture (Wilson & Justiz, 1988; Beckman, 1988). It makes sense, then, that individuals in the middle and upper class microcultures are more successful

in the classroom and in aquatic leadership classes and that members of the working class or of the at-risk population are less successful.

Social class as defined by specific microcultures affects the education of aquatic leaders through the development of the training methods and materials. Pendleton (1975) notes that new approaches to instruction compatible to the different microcultures needs to be developed so that participation in aquatics beyond the learn to swim level can be encouraged. Although many aquatic texts emphasize the 'why' of the 'how' a skill is completed (American Red Cross, 1990b, 1992a; Thomas, 1989; Torney & Clayton, 1981; YMCA, 1986); the most common instructional methods use skill and drill concepts. The traditional curriculum frames tasks or educational activities according to the values accepted by the current curricular practice. Traditional instruction has generally emphasized teaching the American work ethic and culture in a scientifically determined, factory efficient way in order to improve the future quality of life (Oakes, 1986). Aquatics instruction has traditionally emphasized individual success attained through mass instruction and practice.

Traditional aquatics instruction has also emphasized the success of the student as defined by agency values that reflect those of the dominant micro-culture. The teacher becomes the transmitter of specific knowledge; the students

are tested on what has been transmitted (Langer, 1991; Freire, 1970). The training materials of the two primary certifying agencies (American Red Cross and the YMCA) as well as the other swimming instructional agencies in the country reflect a strong middle class bias.

In learning environments that reflect a middle class bias, instructors begin to develop the cognitive processes for getting the right answers (Anyon, 1980). Following directions is emphasized; and decision making is allowed within set boundaries. Persons comfortable with the middle class bias generally succeed in the traditional aquatic leadership development courses. The material in these courses is usually presented in a progression in which the student is guided toward correctly analyzing situations and making the appropriate decisions.

In comparison, students in working class schools are taught to follow the rules (Anyon, 1980). Teachers control the learning environment and make the decisions without explaining the process or consulting the students. Many basic level swimming classes reflect a technical value system (Huebner, 1975) similar to what Anyon (1980) described in the working class schools. The swimming teacher controls the learning environment, enforces rules of safety, carefully specifies the objectives, and evaluates student change. The assembly line is a type of class organization that is often used in beginner (Level 1 through

Level 3) classes. In the assembly line, students learn one skill at a station and move from station to station. Students in this learning environment often acquire fragmented basic skills and are not stimulated to continue their learning experiences (Allington, 1991), either in the classroom or the pool.

Students in a learning environment that reflects an affluent professional or executive elite culture are taught the creation, use and manipulation of symbolic capital or culture through the use of ideas and concepts in language, math and science (Anyon, 1980). Young adults from the professional or executive elite culture usually enter aquatics through participation on competitive teams.

Therefore the degree of success of an individual appears to be dependant upon the similarities between his/her microculture and the microculture that defines the curriculum. Success can reflect overall academic success (Anyon, 1980), success in reading (Allington, 1991), or success with aquatic skills. Wieser (1994) noted similarities between the success in swimming skill and the microculture of the swimmers. Those swimmers at the pool characterized by the working class microculture demonstrated poor body position and stroke mechanics (head up, straight arm pull and recovery, bicycle kick) on the front crawl over very short (three to five strokes) distances. The swimmers at the pool that was characterized by the upper middle class

or professional microculture demonstrated a high level of skill (good head position and coordinated, effective arm and leg actions) on several different strokes over continuous multiple lengths. Therefore, a greater overlap between the microculture and the learning environment appears to be one factor that promotes skill development.

The Effects of the Microcultures on the Development of Role Models

Differences between microcultures effects the training of aquatic leaders in another, perhaps more subtle, way. Aquatics is considered an European American middle class sport (Pendleton, 1975); and most European Americans who enter aquatics leadership courses expect to succeed. Their success is congruent with their expectations as well as the expectations of others in the community. Their development as a role model is supported and praised by the community. However, an African American who completes the training program and becomes a role model, becomes involved in experiences beyond his/her accepted cultural boundaries as defined by the microculture or community. Stepto (1991) documents this separation from community in the African American experience. He identifies the two choices for the individual as the path of ascent and the path of immersion. In the path of assent the individual embarks on a journey that removes him/her from the family, community

traditions and the oppressive social structure. Through education, and economic and cultural achievements, the individual obtains a new position in a least repressive environment and becomes an articulate survivor. The cost, however can be solitude, at best, or alienation, at worst. In the path of immersion the individual remains in the oppressive social structure and submerges him/herself in the experience of the common culture. If he/she survives, he/she becomes known as the articulate kinsman, the repository of tribal knowledge.

Fordham (1988) represents the articulate kinsman by the term "fictive kinship" (p. 56). The term, according to Fordham (1988), represents "the Black Americans' sense of peoplehood in opposition to White American social identity" (p. 56). The African American student has several basic choices (Fordham, 1988; Stepto, 1991). The student can choose to become immersed in the Black culture and therefore remain a stranger in the White culture and possibly experience failure (Fordham, 1988; Heath, 1983; Gilbert & Gay, 1985). The student can assume the White school culture and become un-Black or raceless and experience success (Fordham, 1988). Or the student can develop a double consciousness (attempt to be both Black and White) and experience frustration, confusion, anger and possible success (Fordham, 1988; Stepto, 1991). Therefore the discrepancy between the cultures of the learning situation

and community becomes a major factor in student performance. Because of the low numbers of minorities who participate in aquatics, the culturally different students who succeed as aquatic leaders are identified by their peers as leaving their own microculture and joining the mainstream, or European American, culture.

Summary

The lack of aquatic leaders from diverse microcultures illustrates many of the issues that we struggle with in other arenas. Many factors appear to interact and limit the development of aquatic leaders from the African American community; however, those factors that promote the development of aquatic leaders from the European American community also need to be identified. Some of the reasonable and logical factors that appear to be involved include: access to economic and cultural capital which determines where facilities will be built and by whom the facilities will be used; educational materials and teaching methods which effect the success of the student, the choice of a career path and the economic niche of the individual; and support from the community and the family which can challenge or reinforce a sense of identity and belonging. In order to better understand the issues involved with the development of aquatic leadership, it is important to discover the training path and the perceptions of those

African American and European Americans who are currently aquatic leaders.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The culture of any one human social group is defined as the knowledge, skills and belief systems that enables members of each social group to interact with the environment and with each other (Bullivant, 1989; Thomas, 1993; Goodenough, 1981). Naturalistic inquiry provides a means of studying one culture from the perspective of another (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993; Thomas, 1993). In a subjective research method, such as naturalistic inquiry, the results of the investigation are shaped by the interaction of the frames of reference of the participant and myself, the researcher (Guba, 1990). To understand culture, I must "enter" and accept the culture of another.

An objective research method emphasizes control, prediction and proof that could limit understanding. Traditionally, the objective research method uses predefined questions and hypotheses that are subject to manipulation under controlled conditions. However, an individual's perceptions of events within a cultural setting is not a controlled condition that can be easily (or ethically) manipulated. In addition, predefined questions and

hypotheses are developed out of the belief system of the researcher; and subjects simply verify or refute the original premise (Agar, 1980). The conventional research method is controlled by the researcher; the design is established at the beginning and is adhered to throughout the study. For these reasons, I rejected using a conventional research design in this study.

Naturalistic inquiry does not control the research or the conclusions; instead, both the research and the conclusions are constructed out of the data collection - analysis process (Agar, 1980; Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993). The data collection and analysis interact as the investigation evolves. An informal analysis is conducted through out the data collection process which consists of interviews, reflection, transcription, synthesis and debriefing. In this study the data collection cycle consists of the interview, reviewing the tape, reflection on the participants information and the framing questions, and planning the next interview. I completed the data collection-analysis cycle three times; by the third interview "no significant new information emerged or no major new constructions were being developed" (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993, p.71). With each analysis-data collection cycle, the material began to develop a focus or "funnel" as patterns, categories and relationships began to take on meaning (Agar, 1980). The narrowed focus of the

material allowed the interview questions to become more specific in order to complete a systematic check of patterns that were being identified.

Research completed using methods of naturalistic inquiry does not enable the researcher to predict results; instead the research process promotes understanding of the situation and of those who interact within the situation. Research that uses methods of naturalistic inquiry does not transform or manipulate the situation; instead, the research describes the situation; any transformation that takes place occurs in the mind of the participants or of myself, the researcher, not the "real" world (Guba, 1990). Therefore, naturalistic methods document individual interpretations of the world, illuminate interactions between individuals and cultural groups, and promote deeper understanding of an event.

The Participants

This study used naturalistic inquiry to investigate the perceptions of African American and European American aquatic leaders. Four African American and four European American male aquatic leaders (lifeguards/swim instructors/pool managers) were interviewed three times for about an hour to an hour and a half. Male aquatic leaders were selected because there were no female African American pool managers (and very few lifeguards/swimming instructors)

in the geographic area chosen for the study. In order to find the participants I notified the public service agencies and the Department of Parks and Recreation in Greensboro, NC. I did not contact any of the private community pools because I knew that none of those pools employed African Americans and I wanted to have a more likely chance of drawing either part of my participant population from the same type of facility. After the city and the various agencies checked with their employees, they gave me a list of people to contact. I contacted everyone on the list (17 people) and was able to arrange preliminary interviews with 11 of the original 17. During the preliminary interview I explained the project, the time commitment, and the research procedure, and the Informed Consent: Short Form and Oral Presentation (see Appendix B); two of the people could not commit to the time. Out of the remaining nine I placed the five names of the interested African Americans in a bowl and drew out four names. Three of the original four agreed to be interviewed; the fourth potential participant never returned my call and the remaining African American became the fourth participant. I then again contacted the four European Americans who had gone through the preliminary interview. One of the four had reconsidered and asked not to be included in the project; again I was down to three participants and I did not have any "extras" in my European American population. An Aquatics Director of a public

service agency in Winston-Salem heard of my plight and called me with the information that the Assistant Aquatic Director of her agency was willing to be a part of the study. Since one of the African American participants was also on the staff of a public service agency in Greensboro, I added the young man's name to my list and made arrangements to go to Winston-Salem.

A description of both participant groups follows; the participant data is summarized in Table C2: Participant Data (see Appendix C). For both the African American and European American participant groups, three participants were under the age of 25 and one was over the age of 25; three worked for the city and one worked for a public service agency. In the African American participant group, one of the participants was a lifeguard and three were pool managers; in the European American participant group, two of the participants were assistant managers and two were pool managers. A complete listing of all of their certifications is provided in Table D3: Current Aquatic Certifications Held by Participants (see Appendix D); however, a summary of their basic certifications is provided here. Four of the African American participants had lifeguard training; three were certified to teach swimming; and one was certified as an Instructor Trainer; four of the European Americans had lifeguard training; four were certified to teach swimming; and one was certified as an Instructor Trainer. In years of

experience in aquatics, three of the African American participants had five years experience or less and one had ten years of experience or more; two of the European American participants had five years experience or less and two had ten years experience or more. In school experience, one of the African American participants was a junior in college, two were seniors, and one had graduated; one of the European American participants was a junior in college; one was a senior; and two had graduated. All of the participants had grown up on the eastern seaboard; the farthest south was Florida; the farthest north was New Jersey.

The Researcher

My own swimming story began when my father was transferred by the Navy from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to Norfolk, Virginia in the fall of 1950. We moved into a house on the north end of Virginia Beach that was one block from the ocean. In the wintertime very few families lived in the north end (on our street there was one other family) so that the neighborhood appeared to consist of empty houses and a vast expanse of dunes, sand, and ocean. I believed that I had been given the largest, most fascinating sandbox in the world; and the ocean came with it.

When he was home, my father would take me "swimming" in the ocean; at other times my older sister would take me to

the beach and I would play in the waves. I received my first formal lessons at a Girl Scout camp. The pool had a mud bottom and brown water that was circulated through from the adjacent reservoir. I did not like to be in that pool; I refused to put my face in the water or my feet on the bottom. Although I could swim some (I had gotten a book from the library on how to swim, had "taught' myself in the ocean, and had been able to practice in a few other pools), it took me three summers to pass the beginner swim course in the camp pool. The only reason that I passed the test that third summer was that I would then be able to take canoeing, which I very much wanted to do.

I also took lessons at the pool on the military base and also in the old pool of the Cavalier Hotel. In 1960, encouraged by my family and oldest sister, I took SCUBA diving from my brother-in-law; I did not get certified because of ear problems on my check-out dives. I took the course again the following summer and received my certification. My senior year in high school, my mother encouraged me to take the Senior Lifesaving Course (now Lifeguard Training) and Water Safety Instructor. None of the swimming or the lessons that I had done up to that point prepared me for the level of swimming that was required in either course; I learned to swim in those two courses. After graduation that summer I started teaching; the lessons were a special cooperative program between the local Red

Cross and the YWCA. Although the bulk of the lessons were in a community pool in Virginia Beach, I also taught lessons at the Cavalier Pool and in a backyard pool in Grandy, NC.

In college I repeated both the lifeguarding and the instructor course to improve my skills and for PE credit. I swam (pitifully) on the swim team for two years and on the synchronized swim team for one year. I continued to teach every summer for the Red Cross, YWCA or the Girl Scouts. When I graduated from college I knew that I wanted to work in aquatics at the college level; I had no idea how to get the necessary training or credentials for that job. Aquatics was part of the field of physical education and the least of my talents were in land-based physical activities. My most unlikely image of self at that time was physical educator, so I worked in other areas (as a physicist doing coal mine safety research, as a retail store manager, as a tax consultant-bookkeeper) and taught swimming whenever and wherever I could. In 1980 I received my instructor's certification for SCUBA and began teaching for a local shop.

In 1981 I learned of an opening for Aquatics Director at the High Point YWCA; I applied and was hired. I started back to school for a master's degree in Physical Education and eventually quit work in order to go to school full time and complete my residency. I began working at the Greensboro YWCA as Aquatic Director while I finished my thesis. Shortly after I finished the master's degree, the

position at UNCG became available, I applied and was hired. The work that I am doing now is the work that I knew I wanted to do when I graduated college in 1967. Currently I hold certifications in First Aid, CPR, Lifeguard Training, Water Safety Instructor, SCUBA, Certified Pool Operator and Adapted Aquatics. A complete list of my certifications is included in Appendix E, Researcher's Current Certifications.

Researcher Subjectivity

In order to complete this type of research, the researcher must understand his or her own construction of reality. A researcher who is unaware of his/her fears or comfort level in the water and swimming will identify different patterns and come to different conclusions than a researcher who is aware of his/her fears or comfort level. A researcher who does not swim will have different sensitivities to the material than a researcher who swims. The subjective nature of the research can strengthen the research method as long as the researcher is aware of the different perspectives he/she may hold. The deliberate interaction between the frames of reference of the researcher and the participant provides a deeper understanding of the particular social context. In addition, the researcher gains a greater understanding of his/her own social context.

My own expertise in aquatics was both a blessing and a curse in connection with this investigation. I needed to be

aware of the many perspectives (lifeguard, swim instructor, pool manager, consultant, researcher) that I brought to the data collection. My knowledge and understanding of aquatics and the issues of leadership helped me develop a rapport with my participants. In addition, rapport was enhanced by a variety of dual relationships that I shared with several of the participants. As a summer employee for the Greensboro Department of Parks and Recreation, I worked with several of the participants throughout the summer. My visits to the pools were for the purpose of improving and maintaining good guarding standards and ensuring that the pools were clean and the water was properly maintained. I did not have the authority to hire or terminate the pool employees.

An additional dual role developed from my instructional activity within the community. At one time or another I trained or worked with many of the African American and European American aquatic leaders who indicated an interest to participate in the study. These dual roles provided the benefit that I was not an unfamiliar person for many of the potential participants and that a rapport had already been established through a prior relationship. The same dual relationship could be a limitation to the research if the participants did not feel secure with the participant-researcher relationship. In order to enhance that relationship I discussed the dual role before each data

collection session. I reiterated the fact that the participant was the expert in his own perceptions and value systems. In addition, it was made clear that what was said during the interviews remained in the interviews. Questions about events in the pool were asked in order to better understand the perspective of the participant. It was also be made clear that what was said in the interview would not be held against them or be repeated to another person. The multiple nature of the researcher-trainer role required that I remain aware of the ethical considerations in the research situation. The participants were given the phone number of the Chair of the Doctoral Committee and instructed to call and discuss any misconduct or infringement of their rights by the researcher. The participants' real names were not used and they were asked to review both the transcript and the interpretation/reflection of the transcript.

The Debriefer

Extensive knowledge on the part of the researcher can create barriers to understanding or viewing the data in different ways; therefore, I must remain aware of other possible interpretations. An analytical and supportive debriefer is a necessary component of the research and assists with the identification of alternate interpretations. Peer debriefing provides research credibility by exposing the researcher's interpretations,

conclusions and possible biases to the questioning of an analytic peer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The debriefer has enough general understanding of the topic to allow him/her to analyze materials, test emerging designs and question hypotheses (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993). The debriefer also serves as a type of counselor, listening to the researcher's frustrations and helping the researcher develop needed coping strategies (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). My peer debriefer was an African American male who had previously worked in aquatics for 10 years and who currently was a Center Director for Parks and Recreation. My debriefer definitely listened to my frustrations and adjusted and verified the direction that I was taking with the analysis more than once. During the major portion of the analysis, I met with my debriefer about every two weeks.

The Method

After the participants completed the informed consent, the first series of interviews was scheduled. The interviews began with broad, open-ended questions; the focus and questions of the interviews narrowed as issues and themes developed and were identified. Several of the interview techniques included using words that are a part of the participant's vocabulary (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993), using probes to pursue a topic in more depth

(Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993), and using bait
questions and distribution checks to verify concepts and
check for understanding (Agar, 1980). A copy of the
interview guide for each interview is included in Appendix
F, G, and H.

Throughout the interview-analysis process I was aware
of the careful accountability that is required when using
naturalistic research methods. Ways to establish
accountability include trustworthiness, transferability,
dependability, and confirmability (Erlandson, Harris,
Skipper & Allen, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
Trustworthiness is a measure of credibility or confidence in
the findings (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993;
Thomas, 1993; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba
(1985) and Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen (1993)
identify some of the ways to establish trustworthiness as
prolonged engagement, triangulation, peer debriefing and
member checks.

Prolonged engagement establishes credibility by
insuring that sufficient time is spent in the situation to
overcome distortions of unique events or individual bias
(Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993; Lincoln and Guba,
1985). In this study a total of about six hours was spent
with each participant. The total time included the
preliminary interview, the interviews themselves, and
informal time spent with the participant, taking the

participant to lunch, or sitting and talking with them at their pool. Triangulation uses multiple sources (people and documents) or multiple methods of data collection (observation and interview), or multiple interviews to provide credibility. Obtaining the same information from a variety of sources reduces the potential errors due to interpretation (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In this study, triangulation was attained through multiple interviews. Throughout the interview process several issues were revisited in order to verify the participants' perceptions. The debriefer and I discussed the emerging information and patterns throughout the data collection-analysis process. Member checks enhance credibility by submitting the collected data and interpretations to the subjects for their verification and additional comments (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993). The transcriptions of the interviews and the personal histories were given to each of the participants. To date, the participants have not responded to the collected data.

Transferability is the extent that the findings can be applied to other contexts or with other respondents (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability needs to be approached with caution. In naturalistic inquiry one context is studied in detail and it is problematic to generalize information from one social context to another. Transferability can be promoted by use

of "thick description" and purposeful sampling (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The "thick description" that I have used in this study is to allow the participants to speak for themselves whenever possible so that the reader comes to know the participant and not my interpretation of the participant. Purposeful sampling is based on the reflection about the data collected and is a procedure that seeks both typical and divergent examples of data to further develop insight. In the study I tried to pay attention to negative examples or slippage so that the interpretation or analysis would be true to the story.

Dependability is a measure of consistency and is determined by a dependability audit (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Confirmability relates to the fact that the findings are a product of the focus of the question and not the biases of the researcher (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Confirmability is established through a confirmability audit that traces the logic of the researcher back through the documentation to the sources. These audits essentially evaluate the processes of the study or the methodology and the identification of conclusions. I have tried to document the process of the analysis in writing not only this chapter but also in the following chapters. When I wrote the personal histories and completed the analysis

and discussion, I was careful to reference all of the
statements to the page in each particular interview. After
those chapters were complete, I removed all of the
references in the interest of confidentiality.

The Analysis

An informal data analysis was completed throughout the
interview, review and reflection, and matrix process.
After all of the interviews were completed, a three by four
foot paper matrix was completed for each interview. The
matrix consisted of the primary questions for that interview
down the left side of the paper and the responses for each
participant in columns across the page. After the matrix
was completed, copies of the tapes were sent to a
transcriptionist. As much as possible, the tapes were to be
transcribed word for word; pauses and speech sounds ("um",
"er", "ah") were not to be transcribed. The data for
analysis consisted of notes made during the interviews and
upon review of the tapes, the matrix, and the actual
transcriptions of the tapes.

The formal data analysis began after the interview
transcriptions were completed (January). To organize the
data for the analysis, I made copies of all the data and
first created a separate notebook for each interview which
contained all of the participant interviews in that series.
Next, individual notebooks for each participant were created

which contained all three of their interviews. Finally,
each of the interviews was copied onto heavy card stock
paper and filed in a separate pocket of an accordion file.

I established a notebook for the actual analysis which
contained the framing questions, the interview guide for
each interview, a smaller version of the matrix, and all
notes from the analysis. For the first analysis I reviewed
the transcriptions together with the tapes in order to try
to fill in any gaps in the data. The demographic data of
the participants was obtained from the matrix and
transcripts (the participant notebooks were much more useful
than the interview notebooks).

I reviewed the transcripts and tapes again several
times in order to get a sense of the participant. I began
to identify the basic themes and patterns with each reading
of the interviews. I noted words in the margins: sometimes
the word would be one that the participant used over and
over again; sometimes the word would be a defining word that
seemed to summarize the participants ideas; other times I
simply marked the paragraph because the context appeared to
be so well integrated that to use one word or phrase seemed
insufficient.

In two columns on paper I put the words and ideas that
were generated from the interviews of the African American
or European American participants. The two columns were
compared for words and concepts that occurred in both

columns as well as words and concepts that didn't occur in both columns. A sample of words which occurred in both columns included: caring, control, doing your best. A sample of words that occurred in the African American interviews only included: act white, unrealistic goals, color as a crutch. A sample of words that occurred in the European American interviews only included: swimming is natural, connectedness, own car.

Although this method seemed to give me interesting information, the information did not seem to want to come together in any way, shape, or form. In addition, I could sense that these themes were related to the framing questions; but I was unable to make the connection. After meeting with one of my debriefers, I (we) decided that I would review the interviews again with the framing questions in mind.

Using the framing questions to guide the generation and organization of themes and ideas provided much greater success. However the thematic analysis became very difficult because I was trying to come to terms with each person at the same time that I was trying to understand their answers to the framing questions. The thematic analysis was stopped in order to concentrate on the participants.

I generated a timeline for each participant that outlined, age-wise and grade-wise, the major events in their

lives. I returned to the thematic analysis; but the time-
line wasn't enough. After a discussion with my debriefer,
we agreed that personal histories for each informant were
needed in order for the thematic analysis to be meaningful.
Each history was told from the participants point of view
and provided a description of self, a story of his growing
up, information about his family and the influential people
in his life, his swimming story, his school story, any other
story that helped paint a picture of the participant and his
ultimate goal. After the personal histories were complete,
the thematic analysis began to make more sense.

With the first question in mind: What leads to the
decision to become an aquatic leader?, some of the example
responses for both groups of participants included: mother
made sure I learned to swim; I didn't like swimming lessons;
I was in awe of the lifeguards. Example responses from the
African American participants only included: African
American friends don't swim; and I felt different (sense of
identity questioned). Responses from the European American
participants only included: my friends all swam; and my day
was relatively structured.

For the second framing question I focused on: What are
the perceptions on aquatic leadership that are held by
European American and African American aquatic leaders?
Example responses from both groups included: lifeguarding is
perceived as glamorous; lifeguards are responsible for

patron's lives; lifeguards receive low pay. Example responses from the African American participants only included: lifeguards prevent accidents; and staff must have good skills. Example responses from European American participants only included: managers cannot trust staff; rule enforcement must be fair.

For the third question, What influences on aquatic leadership are identified by African American and European American aquatic leaders?, example responses from both groups included the availability and cost of facility. Example responses from the African American participants only included: African Americans don't believe they can swim; and swimming is an unusual activity. Example responses from European American participants only included: swim teams and lessons are available; and African Americans are only interested in basketball and are not interested in swimming. Throughout the analysis of the questions I continued to check with the debriefer to make sure that my own bias was not interfering with the interpretation. Finally, the data was synthesized within cases and across cases; as patterns emerged, the data and patterns were discussed with a debriefer for clarification of interpretation and identification of biases.

The write-up of the data transfers the "field" into the "text" through the narrative reconstruction of everyday life (Spradley, 1980; Thomas, 1993). In doing this

transformation I attempted to categorize the themes of each context, look for similarities and differences, and establish patterns in order to determine the perceptions of African American and European American aquatic leaders on aquatics leadership. The final paper evolved out of the synthesis of the data.

CHAPTER IV

PERSONAL HISTORIES

This chapter discusses several themes in the personal
stories of the informants. Life stories provide a means to
understand how informants make meaning of their lives
(Witherell & Noddings, 1991). Through their stories we get
to know others as we understand the events that influenced
the development of who they are. The stories provide
insight into how others perceive their world; therefore, the
stories provide a basis for understanding perceptions of
aquatic leadership.

The stories, as much as possible, reflect the
informant's point of view and include the themes of:

 self,

 growing up neighborhood or environment,

 family,

 influential persons,

 swimming story,

 school story,

 other growing up stories that he chooses to tell,

 goals in life.

These themes were selected because they represented those
aspects that helped define the identity of the informant as

he grew up and as he entered aquatics. These topics occur in all of the stories but are integrated differently by the informant. In the narratives, I have tried to allow the informant to shape his own personal history so that the themes are not always presented in the same order. The narratives are arranged in alphabetical order. The names have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

DAVID

David describes himself: "I'm about six-foot two, I have blue eyes, medium build, and I'm a hard worker." He has a strong desire to be the best in whatever he attempts which makes him very organized. He takes initiative and gives 100 percent to get things done.

> Competition is the driving factor in my life. It's something that just keeps me going. Like whenever I'm in the classroom, . . I have my daily planner with me; and I write down all my assignments that are due, and then I go ahead and write down a daily thing that I want to accomplish for the day. And within that, I factor in what I need to accomplish for work. . . .To me, it's being the best I can and do the best job I can. And it's <u>hard</u> sometimes. And that's the reason I think of life, for me, is competition, to achieve. Whenever I get my report card back, it says, "Dean's List" on the bottom--that to me is an accomplishment.
> . . So competition for me is almost a metaphor of life."

David ties his organization and achievement to a sense of competitiveness; yet, he has a soft-spoken manner appears to contradict his competitive nature.

David grew up in a small town that was just outside of a larger city on the gulf coast of Florida. He and his friends would play secret spy agents and army in the trees in his immediate neighborhood. When they weren't playing in the neighborhood, they were hanging out at O. Beach which was about a mile away. The beach "town" consisted of a casino at one end of the beach, a playground, little pavilions going down the strip of sand, and a city recreation center at the other end of the beach. Although the town was small, David was bused to a variety of elementary schools ("I was basically the white ratio balancing out the black ratio in a lot of the elementary schools. . . So I grew up kind of color blind as far as that goes.") David's friends came from a variety of ethnic backgrounds; some were Black; some were White; some were Hispanic. According to David, ethnicity didn't matter.

Growing up was hard for David. He exhibits many mixed feelings toward his family. Both his mother and his father had grown up on their own, on the streets. His father was a "rough man--he was angry with his life." First he was a boiler technician in the Navy, then a factory worker, and now installs security systems. He appreciates the advice that his father gave him: "Dad always told me, growing up, that if you're going to do something, even if it's picking up shit, you do it well." But he resents that fact that his father refused to help him get financial aid to go to the

University: "Dad felt that he was filling out some papers for a loan. He didn't even read it. He was like, "I'm not signing any paper." His mother was mentally ill and was hospitalized often "throughout my growing up." Although he sees certain characteristics of his parents as extreme, he has tried to develop some of those same characteristics in himself.

> My father, he was a very industrious man; he always worked hard--and that's something which I myself have tried to emulate. At the same token, I've tried to emulate my mother's compassion--because both of them are just a little bit too far in both directions. My father's a very, very hard-working man; my mother is a very emotional woman.

David saw his accomplishments either ignored:

> A lot of the accomplishments that I did were on my own, a lot of things growing up, like I was the kid who'd go to a high school awards ceremony, and they'd give me the awards, but my parents were never there."

or appropriated by his parents:

> I had a car, but Mom was driving it to work. I never drove my car up until I was eighteen years old. I got it at sixteen. I bought it out of my own pocket, you know? So, as you can see, my family had different perception of what was mine and what was theirs. It was basically everything that I couldn't nail down was theirs.

David has a younger brother whom he characterizes as a kind-hearted con artist. He compares his brother's coping mechanism to his own.

> He's not taking the stress like I did, the way I did.
> I put it toward achieving, and he's putting it towards
> surviving. And achieving for me was a means of
> survival. My brother's not interested in academics.
> He's interested in fun, sun, babes, and money and cars.
> But that's his age; he's about seventeen. But he
> failed the minimum competency test up here in North
> Carolina. He didn't know the difference between a noun
> and a verb.

His brother's lack of academic success bothers David, but he

realizes that he can't do much to help his brother,

especially since his parents don't push education. For much

of his life, David's parents have been taking care of

extended family. When he was growing up, his great-

grandparents lived with the family; now his parents are

living with and caring for his grandmother.

David loved the water when he was younger. He would

play with his boat in the bathtub, splashing water all over

the floor; and swimming became one of the few activities

that David's parents paid for him to do.

> Everything else I paid for myself, except when it came
> up to swim team time, I had to do that myself. But if
> I really think back on things, I think swimming was the
> only thing that my parents really pushed at all in my
> life."

He first started swimming lessons when he was six years old;

the teaching used in the lessons was abominable.

> I had a real bad experience with swimming. They lined
> us all up--I still remember this to this day--they
> lined us all up and they told us all to jump into the
> deep end and not to grab onto each other when we were
> doing it. So we all jumped in. I was on the bottom of

> the pool, looking up. And I remember climbing my way--
> along with everyone else. It was like a chain of
> children on the bottom of the pool, climbing their way
> up to the surface. And I remember this one little
> girl, she was almost there, and I grabbed her by her
> shorts and I jerked her down and I got up. The other
> time was when they told me to walk off like a little
> toy shoulder, off the high dive, and they threw me off
> the high dive. And there was a lifeguard waiting for
> me down below. I'm surprised I even started swimming.

He later learned to swim at the community center in O. Beach

where the lifeguards were giving swimming lessons in the

Gulf (of Mexico). Most of David's friends shared his water

activities. Although none of them shared his desire to excel

in aquatics; they accepted his different interests and

abilities. Growing up it was not unusual for them to spend

most of the summertime on the beach, playing in the water.

David signed up for a Parks and Rec swim team in the summer

of his eighth grade year.

> Initially, the reason why I started going onto a swim
> team when I was younger is because it gave me the
> opportunity to achieve, because they gave all the kids
> ribbons--no matter if you were tenth place or if you
> were first place, you always got a ribbon.

He swam off and on for two-and-a-half years. He quit the

swim team in the tenth-grade year when he had a conflict

with his swim coach over his participation in the Boy

Scouts.

He took and passed his Lifeguard Training and WSI when

he was seventeen and then became a beach guard. When he was

growing up, the beach guards were special.

> The lifeguards out on the beach were people who I could
> look up to, because they made swimming look really easy
> to me. They were people who looked really responsible
> and they cared. I remember one time I got stung by a
> jellyfish and the lifeguard sat me down and he knew
> just what to do. And I remember saying, "Wow, that's
> neat. I like that." To me the lifeguards had a
> really glamorous job. . .And I thought to myself, "Now,
> that's a job I would love to do some day." You know,
> just be able to sit there and help people out like that
> and be a hero.

That first summer David lifeguarded was a difficult summer.

They had several serious injuries and lost several people

including most of one family. David was one of the

lifeguards on duty the day they lost the family.

> It was raining really hard and we were sitting in the
> rescue truck lookin' at the funnies. We got a radio
> message to go in and wash the truck. I didn't agree
> with that decision because I felt that a lifeguard
> should be exactly that--save some people's lives--not
> wash trucks. But we went and while we were washing the
> white truck, my chief told us to hop in the truck
> because we have a search and recovery. I thought it
> was fun. I looked at this other guy like "Dude, man,
> we're finally gonna get our pay!" He looked at me; he
> smiled; he's like, "Yeah man, this is cool." Ya' know,
> I didn't know what was in store for me.
>   We got there and they started briefing us. The
> fire trucks were already on the beach so it had been a
> while before they called us to come in. Me and this
> other guy, we ran. I thought it was a game. Got my
> goggles, no one prepared me for what was gonna happen.
> Got to the beach, we were all standin' around; they
> told us that the park ranger had found a car with four
> different pairs of shoes, an adult male about five feet
> tall, an adult female, and two kids, one small about
> eight, and one a teenager. [The mother had remained on
> the beach and was alive; her shoes were the fourth pair
> in the car; but David did not know that.]
>   The place were it was, was like a peninsula type
> system where it's curved around like so, and it crossed
> from the other side across the bay--we guarded the bay-
> -to where it was. Usually during low tide, people
> could walk right across. But where they crossed, there

was a sign that says, "Do Not Cross Here." It was an area where there was like a sand bar that jutted out for about two hundred yards and then it went down to like five feet.

I'm listening and then I turned around and I saw the little bathing suit bobbin' up and down, and it was a little blue and orange and red bathing suit. I got there first. Her lips were blue; her eyes were like quarters, totally white. She had vomited all over her bathing suit. I checked her heart; she didn't have a pulse. I popped back her head to open the airway. It still didn't matter but I dragged her off to the beach. I carried the girl in my arms and laid her out on the beach and I didn't know what to do at that point. I didn't know what to do. Someone started CPR but I knew she was dead, just gone. And it would be a plain outright sin to bring her back. Ya' know, 'cause she'd be a vegetable. I asked my crew chief, "Why, why did these people have to die? Where's the fuckin' father? Where is he right now?" And the crew chief told me, "He's dead."

At that point I ran my quickest miles in my life, looking for the boy and see, I didn't know that the mother was okay. For a long time all I could thing of was this little girl's face. Looking into the face of death is not an easy task--especially when it's someone so young.

It has taken David about four years to come to terms with this incident. He did not receive any counseling from his management; he did not receive any offers of support from his family. He, therefore, kept the burden to himself, did not ask anyone for help, and eventually quit lifeguarding.

About a year later, after moving to North Carolina, David began teaching swimming again. He used the incident to give purpose to his teaching. "I really enjoy teaching. But sometimes I just don't like lifeguarding as much." In North Carolina, David has slowly gotten back into aquatics; he's instructed swimming for the "YW", supervised lifeguards

at a University facility, and worked as an assistant pool

manager and swimming instructor for Parks and Recreation.

David did not have one set of friends that he relied on

but had many friends from different groups, "a _variety_ of

different people". He had friends from his honors classes,

from the group that ran the school; he had friends from the

shop class "who I felt more akin to because of my socio-

economic level" and with whom he had grown up.

> A couple were drug users. . .never did they sell their
> drugs in front of me; never _did_ their drugs in front of
> me. I always felt kind of honored by that, and whenever
> I walked by they always treated me as one of their
> friends, but I didn't have to _do_ everything else that
> everyone else had to do to _be_ their friends. You know?
> And they understood what my family situation was like.
> I guess what I'm trying to say is that they respected
> me for who I was.

He is disheartened by the number of his friends who have not

made it out of their environment. "It's a lot easier to let

things go. It's a lot easier to say, "My parents don't have

anything, why should I do anything with my life?". . .But I

succeeded and I know it can be done. . .but they're not

willing to do it." The fact that his friends were content

to accept their environment is painful to David because he

had worked hard all of his life to better himself

economically as well as academically.

> _Seven_ years old, I started collecting cans and stuff
> like that, and bottles, and I'd cash them in. And then
> I went into cutting yards, I had my own lawn business.
> I was doing twenty lawns a week. And then I was a

laminator for a while. This was in the eleventh grade.
I could have made a living off that, in fact, but it
just wasn't challenging enough for me. And then after
that I became a drug store clerk, and then I became a
lifeguard. So I've done a whole gamut of different
things--even waited tables.

In the same way that it is hard for him to understand his
brother's choices; David finds it hard to accept the life
his friends have chosen for themselves.

School, for David, was an escape, a place where he was
rewarded for doing well; and, "I didn't have to deal with my
family." When he started school, he was labeled learning
disabled and placed in remedial classes for speech, reading,
writing, and math. He worked hard to overcome those
disabilities; he went to the library and read as much as he
could. "For me, knowledge was consuming, because once
again, you've worked real hard, you saw results." When he
reached middle school he began to have problems with
allergies, "and those debilitated me, while I went ahead and
launched into trying to advance my intellectual skills,
physical skills fell back." By the time he reached high
school he was taking the honors classes and active in school
activities. ("The thing that attracted me most is science.
I enjoyed that, it made sense.") At graduation, he received
the Humanitarian Award, for someone who had been responsible
for making the school a successful place.

Another opportunity that was presented to David by one
of his high school teachers was the chance to participate in

a leadership seminar that was sponsored by a local civic
organization. Although he felt more like a loser than a
leader, David jumped at the chance to get away from his
family. Out of 116 delegates, he received an award for
"Most Outstanding Delegate" and was asked to return the
following two years to serve on the staff of the seminar.

However, the most influential organization on his life
was the Boy Scouts which he joined in the eighth grade-year.

> I think that the Boy Scouts of America was a pivotal
> point in my life, as far as giving me the leadership
> skills, the confidence, the knowledge of myself and
> others--especially with just being a follower--because
> my scoutmaster always told me, "To be a good leader,
> you have to be a good follower."

He states that during the early years of scouting he was
more of a hoodlum that an Scout. "There's a lot of things
that I did as a Boy Scout wearing my uniform that I know
were wrong. I prefer not to talk about that." However,
through the Boy Scouts, David learned organizational and
time management skills; the organization provided
opportunities for him to interact with his peers and to
achieve. He learned to delegate without being overbearing;
and he increased in self confidence.

One of the proudest moments in his life was the day he
attained Eagle Scout. His project took 256 hours to
complete and he had to drop off of the swim team and track
team to do it. Although his parents weren't there for that

moment, his scoutmaster was; in the same way that all of his scoutmasters had been there for him during his biggest years of turmoil. "The Boy Scouts, God, I'm just so very thankful that I got the opportunity to associated myself with that organization, 'cause it really and truly did change my life." Yet, David is reluctant to say that the Boy Scouts was the only influence on his life.

> Oh my God, that's a really hard question to answer, because there's been so many people. I can't really say there's been only one person who's made a large mark on my life. It's been a lot of people who just helped me a little bit in certain areas of my life. So if I were to say one person it'd be unfair to all those other people who spent so much time with me.

Right now David is unsure of the direction that his life will take once he leaves school. He knows what he doesn't want; "I don't want to be cooped-up in an office all my life, pushing papers, signing my name." He knows what he does want; "I plan on being successful one of these days. . .And successful could be in being married and having some kids. That's my idea of being successful. And if making fifty thousand dollars a year, what an added bonus!" Ultimately, he would like to be able to "have the opportunity to save the world in my own way, to be able to leave a little footprint in the sand that's not going to be washed away for a while."

<u>EARL</u>

Earl describes himself as a quiet guy who lets his actions speak rather than his words.

> When I need something done, I'm the kind of guy that'll go out and do it, instead of calling about fifty million people, "How you supposed to do this?", I like to find out how to do it myself and then just get it done.

Earl demonstrates his independence through self reliance; but he realizes that his way is not the only way: "I've learned that everything <u>can't</u> be my way. I'm going to have to adapt to <u>other</u> people's ways, never a one-way style."

Earl grew up experiencing two different cultures. Throughout his childhood, his father was in the military so the family moved from place to place, mostly on the eastern seaboard. When his father retired, the family moved into an African American neighborhood in a 'military town' along the coast of North Carolina. During the time that his father was in the military, the family lived in base housing. Earl describes the influence rather than the appearance of the neighborhood:

> A lot of the people that we lived around was Caucasian. And a lot of my values and the way that I grew up, like the sports that I play: I'm black and I can't play basketball and stuff. I can play soccer, I play tennis, any other sport. I can swim my butt off. It was like they influenced me, the people that I was around, influenced me for what I did. I don't know if I would have grown up in mostly African neighborhoods, what would have happened, but being that my father was in the military, we grew up around a lot of Caucasians

and everything, kind of influenced my life to drive off in a different way, instead of finding somewhere to work---to being the leader, and in control of things.

As a teenager, Earl's sense of identity and of being in control was especially important when the family moved into the African American neighborhood. First he sets the house into the neighborhood:

> We had a nice house, about a half-acre back yard. The neighborhood was kind of bad until it got to our house. Then it was like, "Gosh, this house doesn't belong here," and stuff, and it was just the way that my parents took care of the house and everything. And really, it was a real nice house.

Later, he describes the neighborhood: "I was brought up into a black neighborhood where everything was bad--drugs-- and you can walk down about three houses and buy drugs and whatever." He describes the culture shock that he experienced:

> When I was fifteen, sixteen, and I moved into an Afro-American neighborhood, they kind of gave me a culture shock. Instead of saying, "Bull," and stuff like that when I'd disagree with somebody, they was laughing at me, because, "Why can't you cuss? What's wrong with you? Why do you talk like this?" That neighborhood was black. First time I met a girl that was like, "Come here. Come over to my house," and stuff like that. I was like, "Wait a minute. What do you want?" Being introduced to that, I was like, "Ay, Mama never said about this!"

The differences between right, wrong and acceptable was dramatic; Earl continues:

> It's like this is right, and this is wrong, but nobody
> ever said shades of gray. And I had to learn what
> those shades of gray were. I got my butt waxed a whole
> lot of times. My parents was like, "Don't do this, and
> don't do that." And I was like, "Everybody else is
> doing it, why can't I?"

Although many aspects of life in his new neighborhood

confused him, he avoided any involvement with drugs:

> I never grew up around drugs when I was on the military
> bases so by the time I moved there, I was like, "No, I
> don't want to go out and mess with the drugs because
> then I know I won't be able to change myself."

Earl projects a strong sense of family when he talks

about his childhood.

> Everything was pretty much going great. I think most
> of it had to do with my parents. Well, my mom, she was
> a school teacher and English teacher, so she knew
> exactly when grades were comin' out and when teachers
> day was. She knew how much we liked swimming, so one
> of the things that she would cut out was swimming, and
> going out in the afternoons. So when we were shaped it
> was right then.

He saw his mother as instrumental in teaching him how to set

and achieve goals.

> If you learn to do something when you're a kid, and
> you're setting little goals for when you get to an
> adult; it's kind of how you stabilize them or build a
> solid foundation. So one of the things that she would
> do is if we took up something, we were gonna stay with
> it for a good amount of years. Like when I learned how
> to play the trumpet it was like, "Okay, I bought you
> the trumpet. From now on you're in the band. Every
> time I come home, I better be hearing that instrument
> play for at least an hour."

Growing up he saw his father as a provider: "My father was great. I can't say _everything_ I wanted I got, but ninety percent of the stuff that we wanted, we had, all the luxuries." His father was a military recruiter by the time he was in grade school: "He had his picture up on billboards and everything, so that he had a nice little office that he would go to and then come home every night." His father took an interest in the activities of the boys and was a coach for Earl's soccer team.

Earl has a twin brother who is very close and who shares many of the same interests.

> Everything I did, he did; everything he did, I did. I always had a friend, since I was moving from place to place and it was like friends was hard to find. Or you can find a buddy, but they weren't a friend. It was somebody just to talk to. Through my brother and his friendship, we grew up together, and it kind of influenced me. Because learning how our friendship intertwined, I like to get _other_ friends like that.

His brother is now married and lives in another city in North Carolina. His brother dropped out of school and began to work full time in order to support his family. At one time his brother was an aquatic supervisor at first for the city and then for a private company. When the company management changed and he lost his job, his brother took the opportunity to go into another field in which he could make more money. Earl also has a sister who is starting college.

He only mentions infrequent visits to his grandparents.

His parents went through a divorce when Earl was nineteen. The divorce was messy and the once tightly knit family was torn apart.

> Father brought me to the courtroom and I didn't know what was going on. Mother had me by one arm and he had the other arm. They was pulling me, literally, both of them! It was like especially terrible in school, because all of a sudden from making good grades, from A's and B's, it was like I wasn't even going to class. I couldn't stand my own grades. It's like even now I can't stand to go home. It really tore me apart from my parents. I don't want to go home and see my father, I don't want to see my mom. My sister was torn up too; and my brother, I guess it <u>did</u> tear him up--it had to.

In spite of the divorce and the resulting disintegration of the closely knit family unit, he states that his family, his mother, father, and brother have had the greatest influence on his development. "It's all the little contributions that made me up into what I am today, because I may take stuff that I learned from my mother and adapt it to the way that it best suits my needs, or me."

He first learned to swim when he was about three years old.

> My mom signed my brother and I up for a class at Elizabeth City State University that was right close to the military base were we lived. I remember going there, and the instructor was black! Oh my goodness! I remember the swimming pool and everything, which amazes me. He got us in there, he taught us, and he was like, he took it nice and slow for us.

At that time they had a baby pool in their back yard; and after lessons his parents took them into the water and played with them. "Every summer my brother and I were taking swimming lessons. We just progressed every year, and then came Lifeguard Training, which we were too young to pass, but they put us through it anyway."

All of the swimming and the lessons took place while his father was in the military. And all of his friends at this time could swim. After his father's retirement and the move into the African American neighborhood, none of his new friends could swim. Earl describes the reaction of the two groups of friends toward swimming:

> The first group, when I was around the Caucasian group, it was like, just basically everything centered around swimming that wasn't work oriented. They loved the swimming part. It was like, "We're going to the pool. Let's have races. Let's rally off the board. Let's just do whatever in the water. We're going to the pool every day. We're going to lay out on the deck." The other group was like, "Swimming?! What you gonna go swimming for? That's not fun. Gettin' wet and stuff like that. Let's go to the park and meet the women. Let's do this and let's do that." So I went from one group when we swam all the time in a swimming pool that was nearby, to where I didn't swim for about a year, or two years, until my parents bought a pool.

After his parents bought the pool, his friends would come over sometimes, not to swim, but to play in the shallow end. In the summer, Earl and his brother had house work and yard work to finish before they could go out. In the winter, they had to first complete their homework. Once outside,

they caught up with their friends and played football or
hung out together cracking jokes and talking. Sometimes
they were able to get a family car and go cruising, "going
everywhere and nowhere". But when their friends wanted to
"get messed up or get their drugs on, I would be at home.
And the days that they weren't going to go get messed up or
they were broke, then we would hang out and stuff like that,
so it was pretty good."

Earl participated in various sports: "Baseball, a
little football, soccer, racquetball, basketball, -- just
about every sport -- water skiing, surfing. If it was
physical, I did it at one point in time." However, even
with his swimming background, he did not participate on a
swim team because one was not available. Currently, he is
playing racquetball for competition, and, he notes modestly,
is winning occasionally.

Earl liked school; he saw it as a "place to study".
The teachers in the classes that he liked made instruction
fun. "The instructors came in and knew your name, would
call on you, not to intimidate you, but to show they cared."
School, and particularly college, was important for Earl:

> I love school, the lifestyle. It put me into a
> different category of Afro-Americans, to the ones that
> didn't want to do anything, or do drugs and stuff like
> that. The blacks in college were like, "Let's get out
> in the world and do this. Let's get a job, and make a
> difference."

Despite its importance, Earl sees school as providing only one type of learning:

> It taught me a lot of things as far as book sense. A lot of the common sense that really influenced me was through parents and instructors, and just the other people that I hung around. It taught me that you can learn whatever you want in a book sense, but if you come out in the world and you think that everything is going to be laid out, chapter-for-chapter, for you, you're wrong.

Earl believes that college and school provide a solid foundation from which to work; but, "you have to use your knowledge to succeed to where you want to be."

Earl admits to breaking the rules of the pool when he was younger:

> I used to love to dive into the shallow end, well, not the <u>shallow</u> shallow, but around the five-foot end. I could swim pretty well, so I would horseplay, water wrestle, play water polo and stuff.

However, later in the pool and in other places, he and his brother were careful to behave. When they would go somewhere and "someone said,"I'm gonna tell your mother," we set them straight. No rules were being broken or nothing." His mother disciplined and challenged him to excel at all times; she would not allow him (or his brother) to simply get by.

Earl wants to be very successful in life. He defines success as choosing a lifestyle that he wants and living it.

Earl states:

> I may not have $100,000 and everything, but as long as
> I'm happy here, within myself, then I don't have to
> worry about everybody else. Well, I can then <u>help</u>
> everybody else. If I'm not happy inside, how can I
> help anyone else out?

<u>JEROME</u>

Jerome describes himself in active, social terms. "I consider myself outgoing, very responsible, try to be studious. Love nature, love camping, and hiking. Just love doing a lot of stuff and meeting people." He sees himself as a joiner: "I was always in a group bunch; joining summer camp, church groups, T-ball, Little League" or as someone who likes to stay busy: "I always liked to do a lot of stuff: I was in the Boy Scouts, piano lessons, soccer. Just got involved with everything, just about".

Jerome grew up in a rural area of North Carolina. The land his family lives on has come down through his mother's family from his great-grandfather. The land has been subdivided several times throughout the extended family.

> The house was in the woods with a lot of fields around
> 'cause we stayed in an agricultural area. Tobacco
> fields, corn, like in the woods. Not too many
> neighbors, except for our cousins about up mile up the
> road.

Jerome is the second oldest of four boys. His older brother is a corrections officer in a juvenile detention center. His two younger brothers are currently in high

school. Although his parents were divorced when he was in the 8th grade, they have remained friends and his father stops by the house fairly often. His mother works as a nurse; his father owns a night club. He mentions his father briefly:

> We're almost too much alike. We really bump heads sometimes. We speak, but we don't really get along".
> . .He's very strict. He'd just tell us one time, we'd get out and go do it [household chores]. Then after he left we realized we really didn't have to do that, because back then our mom never disciplined us."

The people in his life who had the most influence were "all the people that used to make me work back in the day". He worked in the fields in the summer for his uncle, priming tobacco and picking butter beans. He specifically mentions his grandmother who took care of him while his mother worked:

> When we was small, my mama worked like thirds or seconds, we stayed down there. That's like our summer home. During the summers we always stayed down there. Used to go to church with her so I guess she influenced me the most, for what was right and wrong.

In addition, his grandmother worked at the elementary school.

> My mom used to take me when she'd go to work. I used to ride over there with her [to the school with his grandmother] about 6:00 in the morning, help her vacuum and all that before school started.

Although Jerome identifies his grandmother as the most influential person in his life, he tells many stories that illustrate the importance of his mother. His mother supported and encouraged his interest in anything that he wanted to do: "My mother took me to whatever I wanted to to. She never told me "no." His mother made the decision to:

> ...get us involved with stuff. Gave me a form of discipline or instruction where you know I had something to do or had a place to be at all times. At an early age I had a time frame, where everybody else was out running around, we always had a time.

His mother acted as a study hall facilitator:

> We used to have to do homework, whether we had some or not, my mom would be like, "if you ain't got none, you better make up some." So it was easy to go do some math problems and show her than write an essay or something.

and as a truant officer:

> I skipped one time. I was at the plaza. They had just built a plaza. It's like walking distance from the high school. I don't know who had called her, and the hospital is like two miles from the high school. She came down to the plaza. I was coming out the sporting goods store, and there she was. She came and picked me up and I had to go back to school.

His mother was instrumental in his learning how to swim. She enrolled both Jerome and his older brother in swimming lessons at a private school near the hospital. They were the only African American children in the class and they

ended up being "the best swimmers in the group". The only time that he went to a pool was for swimming lessons. The rest of his swimming he did either in the ponds behind his house or in a lake during aquatic weekends with the Boy Scouts. He completed his swimming merit badge and the Boy Scout Lifesaving program when he was 15 and then worked as a lifeguard at the Boy Scout camp for a while.

Jerome had different sets of friends. Although he had 'city' friends in elementary and middle school, he spent most of his time with his cousins in the neighborhood or with members of his Boy Scout Troop. Few of his 'city' friends were able to swim:

> I didn't have <u>too</u> many friends that <u>knew</u> how to swim, for some reason. Usually if I'd swim it was with my cousin or someone I was in the Scouts with, somebody that knew how to swim. Most of my friends in high school and elementary school didn't know how to swim.

Neither his cousins or his 'city' friends were interested in going to the pool:

> No one would want to go. It was like twenty or thirty minutes. Probably get more people to say, "Let's go jump in the pond, swim across," or something. But going to the pool. . .probably get hit, "Man, shut up!" Nah, we didn't do that too much.

Instead, in elementary school and middle school, they would watch movies or play basketball.

> I watched like three or four movies a day---especially during the hot summer, sit up in the AC, watch movies,

then when it get dark might to outside an shoot some
ball. I pretty much didn't leave the neighborhood. My
cousin, right across the street, was like a pal.

In high school, his friends who lived in the projects in
town would play basketball on the court next to the pool;
swimming was not the thing to do.

School was "alright"; although Jerome didn't like
studying, he did like most of his teachers.

Some of them take the time to pull you to the side. I
think they can have a big effect. It's more than
teaching, just them pointing to the chalkboard and
teaching how to read or write, stuff like that. It's
more your foundation.

In another interview Jerome states that learning _is_ fun once
you learn something. He did not begin to enjoy school until
the past two years in college. However, he realizes that
school, before college, at least provided structure for his
time. "You go to school every day, you tend not to get into
too much trouble sometimes. I mean, when I was a kid and
whatever. So I can see a big difference in me, and that's
good."

Jerome mentions structure and discipline through out
the interviews. Although he does not seem to recognize the
structure and discipline provided by his immediate and
extended family, he does acknowledge the discipline provided
by the Boy Scouts on aquatic weekends and in other
activities. He also acknowledges the contributions of his

coaches in the various sports. In middle and elementary school he played basketball, soccer, and baseball. In high school, he played sports, football and wrestling, specifically to maintain a form of discipline. He believes that had there been a swim team available, he would have tried out for it. He is no longer playing team sports. His speed has dropped too much for football and his current college does not have a wrestling team.

In high school Jerome met and started hanging out with a new group of friends who lived in the "city part of the community". Although he made a personal decision to not smoke or drink in high school, he does, somewhat sheepishly, mention getting into trouble. He would not define the trouble that he got into; however, he talks about hanging out, listening to music, and does admit to experimenting with drugs. "I seen a change, when you use it, but it wasn't enough for me to want to try it any more. I've seen a lot of my friends go that route."

Ultimately, Jerome wants to own his own home and his own business. "Be able to go in at ten or eleven, see how it's running, check on the money. Don't really have to be there, just a place to check up on and know I'm making money on, like a bowling alley, restaurant."

KEVIN

Kevin describes himself using very energetic terms: ambitious and aggressive. He sees himself as outspoken and like his father: "Dad is the one who's a take-charge guy, get's it done, get's it over with. And that's the same thing that I do."

Kevin grew up in a small city in central North Carolina. He describes his neighborhood as being younger than he was. Although there was a neighbor across the street who was a year older than he was, Kevin gives the sense that they did not do things together: "Where I live is either right smart bit older than I am or right smart bit younger -- at least five to six years. So there wasn't anybody really around me my own age."

With some degree of bravado, Kevin describes himself as a wild child:

> Very wild, very wild. Yeah, I had a very fun childhood.
> I got into a lot of trouble. I hotwired a bulldozer
> one time. I got suspended in kindergarten for
> fighting. I painted the dog green. I had a good time.

Kevin sees a difference between the way that children are raised today and the way that he was raised.

> The group I was raised in is a lot different from the
> kids now, in the sense that when I was growing up, my
> parents were strict. From what I've seen now, some of
> the parents, working all the time, don't take as much
> time to teach their kids what's right and wrong.

However, both of Kevin's parents worked outside the home. His mother was a real estate agent and his father owned his own accounting firm. He does not speak much of his mother; of his father, Kevin says:

> I've seen what it's like, growing up with someone who owns their own business. They don't have much time because they're always worried about the business or, you know, "this isn't normal. I'm having personnel problems." Which yes, you will have in other jobs too, but once I leave the job, it's not my responsibility to see that, that thing still runs when I'm gone. I can take a vacation and not have to worry about it. He can't take a vacation, and I grew up with that, and I don't want it.

On the one hand he realizes and takes pride in the similarities between he and his dad; and on the other hand, he seems to resent the amount of time that his father spent working. However, he states that his father had the greatest influence on his development as a person.

> He's a very stern, strict, get-straight-to-the-point type. But he's always very thorough and factual in what he does and he always has things to back it up. Something he always pressed on me was that no matter what I ever did, be sure to have something written down, or find something that can back you up to cover your butt.

He briefly mentions his younger brother who is his exact opposite. His brother is "laid back, nothing really bothers him, nothing gets to him. He's happy as long as he's got a TV and a couch to sit on." His brother is still in school and works for a textile mill. His grandfather on his

father's side owned a service station/car dealership; and

his grandmother was a school teacher. His other grandfather

sold shoes; his other grandmother was a nurse. He does not

mention his grandparents further.

Kevin started swimming between the age of three or four

at the YMCA. He vaguely remembers that:

> The instructors at the YMCA were mean. I remember them
> telling me the first day. I don't think I was ever
> given the chance to do it on my own. I was <u>told</u> and I
> did not like that at all. I bit one of them so they
> told me I couldn't come back anymore which didn't hurt
> my feelings any because, you know, I felt like they
> were mean to me.

When he was 5 years old, his parents talked him into joining

a swim team at the racquet club (where his parents were

members). He states that his parents "really wanted me to

become a competitive swimmer because they saw that as an

outlet: one to calm me down from being a hellion, and two,

as a kind of a sport that I could build on and do something

with later on." By the time he was six he was swimming the

year around with the local Swim Association. The coach

spent a great deal of time with him and by the time he was

eight, he had gotten his times down and was winning ribbons.

He went to the Junior Olympics for three years in a row. He

quit swimming at the age of eleven; his body was changing;

practices had become more intense; and he had changed age

groups so that his times were no longer winning times. He

describes his life during this period of time:

> It had gotten to the point where I was practicing three
> or four hours a night. I didn't have any time to
> really think. I was going to school, going home,
> eating a snack, doing my homework and then going
> straight to swim team. I felt like it just was not
> what I wanted to do anymore. I wanted to get out and
> do some other things. I wanted to play football. I
> wanted to play basketball. And I couldn't do any of
> that while I was swimming. It was do swimming and do
> nothing else.

For a long time Kevin held the belief that only competitive
swimming was swimming. When he quit competitive swimming,
he says that he stopped swimming, even though he and his
friends would go to the pool during the summer. Due to the
ages of the children in his neighborhood, most of Kevin's
friends were either members of the racquet club, sports
teams or class mates; because they were not competitive
swimmers, Kevin does not see them as swimmers.

> The people I grew up with really didn't swim. I was
> the only one who started that. The rest of the people
> I grew up with played football, basketball and all
> that. With the swimming the way it was, I was doing
> meets on the weekends and I was doing swim team during
> the week; so, I really didn't have much time for
> friends other than the swim team. And most of the
> people who were on the swim team weren't even my age.
> They were older and way younger.

When Kevin quit swimming, he also changed from the private
school that he had attended for four years to public school.
(He does not make any connection between quitting the swim
team and changing schools). At this time, he changed his
whole circle of friends.

> I went from swimming competitively to playing football,
> and you know, doing basketball and things that I wasn't
> able to do when I was swimming competitively. It was a
> total change. I just changed over from one group of
> friends to right into another one. So it was really no
> big deal for me, because at that point in time too, I
> had changed schools--I had gone from a private school
> to a public school, so my circle of friends was gonna
> change anyway.

Even though he was a member of the football, basketball and track teams while in high school, Kevin does not seem to identify with those sports the same level of intense competition that he reserved for swimming. That competitive image for swimming was changed only when he took a swimming class in college in which he did not feel pressured to swim all out.

> That other type of swimming, I don't even know that it
> would be called "regular" because it's different. It's
> hard to put into words, the difference that I found.
> It just doesn't take as much effort as it does in
> competitive.

Kevin shows a strong sense of independence which is evident in his story about his first swimming lessons (he resents being told what to do). Later, he describes the day he got his driver's license:

> I was ready to get it from Day One. It was
> exhilarating. Afterwards, the family went out to eat
> and I got to drive alone. I wouldn't even let my
> little brother ride in the car with me.

That same sense of independence had a major effect on his schooling. Kevin did not like school; for him school was a

prison in which he was told to sit down and not ask
questions. He flunked the whole ninth grade and had to go
to summer school for three years making up for that year.
He felt that the teachers "didn't want to be there and could
care less whether you learned or not." He first went to
college to please his father and dropped out after the first
year.

> Well, I didn't <u>make</u> the decision to drop out.
> Originally when I went to college the first time, they
> had a probationary period. If you had a 2.0 at the end
> of the first semester, you would be off probation.
> Well, I had a 1.97 and they said "Do you want to come
> back?" I'm like, "I'm outta here."

He went to work for an auto parts store and about a year
later made the decision to return to school.

> I'd run across a lot of people who were not very well
> educated. Some of them didn't even have high school
> diplomas. I was surrounded by, not necessarily people
> who were beneath me, but people who were not on the
> same intellectual level as myself; it made it tough for
> me to communicate <u>with</u> them. And they just did not want
> the same things out of life that I did.

Kevin will finally graduate this May. He talks about what
the degree will mean to him:

> I'm doing it myself, and the degree is for me, totally,
> it's only me. I mean, my parents would get the
> satisfaction of, you know, "We put him through school
> and this is what he's got." But it's really more for me
> than for anything else.

Ultimately Kevin wants to join the Highway Patrol. "It's dangerous, but it's stable. I mean, the job isn't going to go anywhere [be done away with]. I like the hours they work and I like the benefits."

LARRY

Larry first defines himself through his position in life: a 48 year old white male, a teacher, coach and pool manager who is married and the father of two children. He then describes himself: "I enjoy working with people; I like to see people learning. I consider myself outgoing, friendly, helpful, dependable." Helping others learn, helping others be successful, is one of his criteria for measuring his own success.

Larry grew up in a small town of about fifteen thousand people in rural North Carolina. The house that he lived in was:

> ...exactly one block from the elementary school, three
> blocks away from the junior high school, and about five
> blocks away from the senior high school. We lived
> right in the middle of the three schools so I walked to
> school every day.

By growing up before the advent of bussing Larry went to school in his own neighborhood. After school, he enjoyed "coming home and playing with friends; do a little bit of everything--whatever was in season. In the fall we played football; in the winter we played basketball; spring we played baseball; in the summer we went swimming." In his

description he portrays a sense of comfortable neighborhood

boundaries and structure.

Larry's parents were to celebrate their fiftieth

wedding anniversary the week after our third interview.

Larry talked about the effect that his parents successful

marriage had on him:

> The stable home life makes a <u>tremendous</u> difference: in
> school, sports anything that you do, to have the
> parents there, <u>both</u> of them, to support you, makes a
> big difference.

He also talked about the lessons that he learned from his

parents:

> Specifically, a way of life that I enjoy. Coming from a
> small town, we learned to work together, appreciate
> some of the simpler things in life, and respect for
> others. Doing what you're supposed to do. Doing
> things the correct way. And taking pride in what
> you've done. I think those are the main things I've
> learned.

Both of his parents worked outside the home. His dad worked

in transportation "working in parts departments for cars,

car salesman, International Harvester". His mother worked

at the courthouse and had been to business school and had

completed a two-year degree from the Woman's College of

North Carolina (now the University of North Carolina at

Greensboro). He states that his mother has had the greatest

influence in his life:

> I talk to her a lot. She's always been a go-getter. She's always encouraged me to do this and to that. Thinking about all the advice and help and everything that she provided, my mother has had the greatest influence.

His mother also tried to establish conditions in which Larry could be successful.

> For me learning to drive a car was a big deal. We always looked forward to that, the extra mobility of getting around. I always worried about things a lot, so I was worried about--I had to pass that test to get that driver's license. So when I turned sixteen, my mom didn't even tell me she'd made the appointment at the Highway Patrol to get me tested. So she picked me up at school and took me out there and to take the test--so I wouldn't worry about it. Did fine. But I-- that's probably the most exciting thing-- from those years.

Larry is the oldest of three boys. Both of his brothers went to college although neither one completed a degree. Currently both of his brothers are living and working in their home town. His mother's parents lived on a farm nearby. The family would visit every Sunday. His father's parents were also farmers, tobacco, and lived in eastern North Carolina. The family would visit his father's parents once or twice a year. When he was younger he spent some time with his grandparents. "I went down for a couple of summers, and helped them farm, and decided I didn't ever want to do that again."

Larry liked school; growing up education was emphasized by his parents.

> That was the <u>most</u> important thing, from a parental
> viewpoint. They always wanted us to do well. When I
> say "us", me and my brothers. And so I wouldn't call it
> <u>pressure</u>, but they do encourage good grades and want
> you to do the best you can in school.

When Larry talks about school, he gives the sense that his

parents did not have to provide much pressure for him to do

well.

> I always enjoyed going to school. I've enjoyed
> learning a variety of things. Even though I've ended
> up teaching science, I know that that's not the only
> thing in the world. One of the main things I learned
> was, you have to work for success. I always did my
> homework, I got my assignments in on time. I worked
> hard and did the best I could.

Although the academic aspects of school were very important

to him, he was also involved in sports.

> Mostly I just enjoyed the athletics. From a small
> town, again, we didn't have a whole lot to do. And so
> what we did was our schoolwork and then our athletics.
> Back at that time I played a lot of baseball. I played
> baseball until I was sixteen years old, which was the
> Babe Ruth League then. I played Little League baseball,
> and then the Babe Ruth League baseball. And then in
> the wintertime, from the seventh grade on, I played
> basketball. So I participated on basketball teams,
> baseball teams and the swimming.

Larry learned to swim when he was nine years old at the

public city pool. He noticed that everyone else was

swimming while he was still walking in the water. He was

soon enrolled in his first swimming class.

> The first thing I remember is how scared I was. I was
> always a bit more tolerant of my students, I think,

putting a face in the water. Because I can still remember how scary that was for me. Going over in the deep water for the first time. I can still remember that.

The next year his parents became charter members of a new community, private, pool "because I just learned how to swim at the public pool." He continued to improve as he swam with friends.

I can remember some of my friends were telling me, you know, "you swim pretty good but you could even be on the swimming team if you could get your kick a little bit straighter." So you know, I just worked until I got my kick right.

The pool in the summertime was <u>the</u> place to be.

Swimming was the thing you did other than play baseball in the summer. Just to cool off, relax, recreational-type swimming. As a matter of fact, in our Little League days our coach said, "Now don't you go swimming before a game" but we did. I don't think it ever hurt my performance there. I enjoyed both of them. But the swimming--especially for <u>our</u> pool--is where the kids went. That's where my friends were, even on rainy days we sat around on the patio and played cards. My mom's a big bridge player, so she taught me to play bridge, and by the time I finished, I taught everyone at the pool how to play. So we really spent a lot of time at the pool in the summertime. That was <u>the</u> place to be. In a small town you either play baseball or you went swimming. And I did both.

When he was 15 his mom suggested that he take a lifeguarding course; "the pool needs lifeguards, you're the age, you need a job, it would be a perfect job for somebody who loves to go swimming and be around the pool." He thought, "Gee, you're right" and signed up for the course.

> We were all non-swimmers. Really to the point of not
> even being able to blow bubbles in the water yet. We
> were all starting from the very beginning. I mean, as
> far as <u>real</u> swimming. Up to then, swimming was just
> recreational, play-around-in-the-pool type stuff.

He passed the course and became a guard. About the same

time the three swimming pools in the area established a

competitive swim program.

> It was more of a fun situation. We only swam for like-
> -we practiced for maybe two weeks--everyday for about
> two weeks, and then they'd have what they called the
> city meet where all the three teams would get together
> and you'd have your trials and finals.

He swam on the team for two years and then took over as the

coach for the team of his community pool. Shortly after

that he became pool manager.

> There was a period of adjustment. It's hard to tell
> your friends what to do. The people who---here I was
> the pool manager and had lifeguards my same age, and
> you're working with people your same age, you realize
> the responsibility and they haven't quite caught on
> yet. Then once they realized that I enjoyed doing what
> I was doing, and that I was doing a good job of it;
> once they realized how smoothly the pools were running
> when I was there, there were very few problems.

He talks about the self-confidence that learning to swim

gave him:

> First of all with the public swimming pool, learning to
> swim was a big thing for me. I felt especially proud
> when I finally was able to move through the water, hold
> my breath and go under and swim. So that was the first
> big step. It gave me a lot of self-confidence to go on
> <u>to</u>--I was rather athletic anyway so I didn't have any
> trouble with coordination, and then going into the
> swimming team, it gives you a lot of self-confidence.

You feel good about yourself, you've made something,
you've accomplished something. It's a good feeling.

Teaching also gives Larry that good feeling and he feels
most successful when he sees the success of his students.
"Where they go, what they do, the people that they become.
When they do good things, then it makes me feel good." In
the first part of the interview Larry states: "I realize
with the profession I've chosen, we'll probably never be
rich, but we have everything we need. So I think that's
about it."

MARCUS

Marcus often uses the word, "lucky" to describe
himself. "I'm the lucky one!" Yet, as he talks about his
life, his luck appears to be the "luck" of opportunity and
thought rather than chance. He describes himself as a very
diverse person:

> I enjoy doing a lot of different things. I have no
> boundaries in what I will try. Sometimes I surprise
> myself in which direction I go on different things, but
> I'll let my heart lead and the mind kind of is in there
> with it. I like to have a firm background on where I'm
> going to stand and then make sound decisions. But my
> heart's got to be in it. I'm a very people-oriented
> person. I've always loved just dealing with kids and
> with other people. I've always dealt better with older
> people than I do with my peers—even growing up as a
> teenager. And just coming in to work for the "Y" and
> working with aquatics has opened me up. So now I feel
> like I'm giving back for what they gave me. I enjoy
> doing that and I enjoy working with kids.

Although Marcus is very outgoing now, he was not always that

way.

> Growing up through my youth age I would cling to my
> mother a lot, so I was very shy and didn't have many
> friends, and I was extremely introverted. And I guess,
> even graduating through college, I had three friends in
> the whole world.

He also did not like the person that he thought he was.

> Eventually I realized that I was a lot better and a lot
> more capable that I ever realized or gave me credit
> for. I was always--I hated my looks, I hated the way I
> talked, I hated everything about myself. I had no
> self-confidence whatsoever.

He began to appreciate who he was through his experiences

with the "Y" and playing soccer through high school. Now

helping others and giving back to others some of what he

received is very important to Marcus.

Marcus grew up in a town in New Jersey. He describes

the environment rather than the neighborhood:

> I grew up in a predominantly White society or town.
> And P is kind of split. It's just like the other side
> of the tracks, because basically there is a train that
> runs right down where the split is--everybody will say
> Upper P and P. Because I never had friends on that
> side of the tracks and what friends I did have on my
> side were kind of so-so. So for college I had to get
> away, get out of state because I had to grow up. I had
> to get away from Mom. And I had to find out what the
> black culture was about; the African American people.
> As my Mom put it, "I had to see that we can do too."

Marcus deliberately chose to attend a historically African

American university so that he would "learn a bit more about

myself and my culture". He states that although the experience did not cause him to change from the person he is, it did help him understand his "people" more.

Marcus comes from a very tightly knit family. He appreciates his parents and the family unit they worked to create.

> My parents were the parents of the luck. There's always love in our household. I don't think my parents ever even discussed divorce. So, I mean, my parents have been tight, as far as I know, for their whole marriage. And I just have to, you know, I thank my lucky stars every day with a prayer at night that I have the fortune to have a family like that, because there are so many people around me, you know, who came from a broken household. So many divorces; everyone divorces too easy. I'm really lucky I have a solid family.

All of his friends and his brother's friends love his parents. Many of his friends still stop in for dinner and call his parents Mom and Dad. Although he has always been very close to his mother and includes his mother as an integral part of his story, he states that his dad has been the greatest influence on his life.

> My father was a very hard man when he was younger and he was coming out of a drug thing with an attitude and "I'm going to do," and things like that--getting into corporate America, and he would bring his frustrations home. So until I was about thirteen, and my brother was nine, we were scared to death of my father. So everything--we--again, we ran to Mom. But right around when I turned thirteen or fourteen, he started loosening up, and it's been a gradual process. I've always been close to my mom, but at that point I started turning toward Dad and started to watch him to see how he does things and things like that. I guess

> when I turned seventeen, my father was my biggest role
> model. I said I want to be as successful as him. At
> the time it was financially, but it's changed over the
> years with my maturity level. Now I can see the love
> that he gave us, even though I was so afraid of him.

His father is a vice president in an insurance company. His

mother works for the school system as an educational

secretary. His brother is currently enrolled at another

historically African American University in North Carolina.

His grandparents live in the general area. His mother's

parents live closest; when he was younger, instead of going

to childcare or daycare or kindergarten he "stayed with my

grandmother and I was passed around in church because my

grandmother was the minister's wife." Although his father's

parents were divorced, he emphasizes that the whole family

is very close.

He started swimming when he was about six years old.

His mother signed both he and his brother up for lessons at

the local "Y".

> I hated it. We were taking Saturday lessons; hated
> every bit of it. Hated the instructors, the smell; the
> water was cold, and all the classes. I think I took
> one, maybe two years.

Later in the interviews he continues his swimming story and

talks about when the family got a backyard pool.

> We stopped going to the "Y" to take lessons when I was
> either eight or ten and we got a pool in the backyard
> in '82 or so. So there was a couple of years that we
> didn't have a pool and I don't remember much swimming--

outside of going to camp and things like that. Then we got a pool, and like for one or two summers I swam a lot.

The pool became the family's "big focus, we had a lot of parties and mom and dad would be there, and that was our main togetherness". When he turned sixteen, his mother encouraged him to take his Advanced Lifesaving.

> She had always been a swimmer and she always wanted to get it but when she turned sixteen, her parents moved into a town without a pool so it just ate at her. So she kind of forced me into it; she didn't tell me _why_ until after I got it, but she wanted me to have it because she had always wanted it, and I just took off from there. I hated the learning to swim part, but when I got to learning how to lifeguard it just intrigued me and I really enjoyed it.

He was so shy that when he went to apply for a job at the "Y" as a lifeguard he took a friend with him to ask about the job. He was hired and two months later was put in charge of the pool.

> At the time I think we were doing about fifty kids a session and there were only three of us on staff. But it was the biggest thing that I was in charge of the pool and everybody at the desk when all the questions camp up, they came to me and here I am sixteen, running the pool at the "Y".

Marcus has continued to excel in aquatics. About two years ago he received an award from the local American Red Cross chapter for outstanding contributions in water safety.

> They claim I had over five hundred hours of volunteer work for Red Cross. I guess it was. I was very . . .

>It was a great award for me to receive. It was <u>totally</u> kept a surprise and it really, really means a lot to me. I do it not for the recognition, but because I love it and to be recognized is just, you know, just nice.

The well-deserved award represents more that achievement in aquatics. The award also represents several years of feeling very alone.

>Back in high school everybody thought I was weird. I had no real close friends. Everybody else was just on the outside. And again, they'll look on the black guy who's playing soccer, you know, "Why do you play soccer? You should be playing basketball or football." Then me working at the "Y" in aquatics. Like "What <u>is</u> aquatics?" That's when you swim in the water. So yeah, they thought I was a little off the wall. They thought I was, you know, across the tracks.

Most of his friends came from either the "Y" (where he worked) or the soccer team (which he played on in high school). He felt that he had a broad base of acquaintances but not many friends.

>I never really felt quote/unquote "accepted" in either, you know . . . the whites and their clique and the blacks and their clique. I was kind of stuck in the middle, like putting the foot over the line in either direction every once in a while.

He describes his sense of two different cultural identities.

>I grew up--everyone thought I was white. You know, if you'd talk to me on the phone you'd thought I was white. The way I dressed and the way I acted, all the black people thought I was too good for them because I "wanted to be white". But it was just the way I grew up. That was what I saw.

At first the accusation that he was trying to be white did not bother him. However, as he went through school, the implications caused him to begin to question his identity.

> I'm a black guy, and I don't know anything about my culture. And so that's when it started really getting into me. It's like, "Well, maybe I _am_, or maybe I _was_" I just know that I don't know as much about my people as I should. . . and my culture. College helped. I got here and I saw, as my mother put it "other black people that are smart, not just the ones hanging out on the corner." It seems like either you're coming out of the ghetto, struggling middle class, or you're a superstar. There's not much in the gray areas between. If you're well-off, or you've educated yourself, went to college, got a good job, you're a yuppie, you're a wanna-be. And the people who are successful, it seems like they feel they have to show off, with fancy cars, tinted windows and the big stereo systems. No, they're not doing drugs and all, but they've bought into the image. That isn't me and I went back to being myself. If you can't deal with a person being a person, being themself, then that's _your_ problem.

Although he believes that necessity of maintaining a specific image is decreasing now, he states that he stills feels some tension in many situations.

Marcus did not put the same effort in school that he did in work. "I was always interested in school, I just never applied myself." Although interested in school, he did not enjoy school. "High school wasn't a like a real "fun" time for me." Looking back upon his high school experience, he feels that he may have enjoyed it more than he realized. He didn't enjoy college that much either; college was work. However, "I really _did_ learn, I learned a lot more in college, not really _book_ knowledge but life

knowledge." Marcus never pushed himself in order to make
high grades.

> I could have been an A student. I could have been on
> the honor roll, dean's list, all that stuff. I never
> pushed myself. I knew it was important, but I hated
> taking the time. And that was all the way through
> college.

Whenever there were classes or projects that he enjoyed, he
would then spend the time and do well. But generally,
whenever he had to choose between school and work, or school
and something else, school lost out.

> I could have gotten better grades but it was just, you
> know, get by. So the influences I had were mostly
> social. Basically, I worked full-time from sophomore
> year (in high school) all the way through graduation
> last December. And I learned a lot there.

Later he talks about the conflicts between school and work.

> In college, I chose to live in an apartment, not the
> dorm. That's what I wanted to do; so I had to do it
> (work to pay bills). So when it came down to it, for
> me, if there was a conflict--school lost.

However, he does credit school for keeping him out of
trouble.

> I wasn't ever a quote/unquote "troubled" youth where
> I'd be in trouble with the law, as lots of my friends
> were. I was too chicken to do anything. But I don't
> know, I guess if I wasn't in school I would have taken
> a different path and I wouldn't be where I am today.

In school, he played soccer and a little bit of basketball.
He also bowled, because his parents did and he discovered

that it was something that he was natural at. He does not

talk about his experiences with basketball; but he does

discuss soccer.

> I was always real laid back, as far as the things my
> coaches. . . I had one coach that appreciated the way I
> played soccer. All the rest of them saw me as too
> laid-back. I had one coach tell me that the reason
> that coaches don't pick you and don't really understand
> your level of playing, your game plan, is because you
> play like the Europeans--you play a slow steady and a
> lot of passing type game. Well I never got into having
> to be the star, "I have to do this, I have to be the
> best". I just continued to play my game and
> eventually, the coaches, I sat more and more on the
> bench as I got in the upper levels, but at that point I
> didn't care.

Despite his experiences on the high school teams, Marcus

loves soccer and continues to play in a local league.

Marcus defines his ideal job as one that will develop

out of the job that he has now. "I want to be a career "Y"

person." He talks about how the "Y" helped him:

> For the most part, I grew up in the "Y". They gave me
> my self-esteem, gave me self-confidence. When I
> started working I was just a shy sixteen-year-old.
> Couldn't even ask for the job myself. And here it is
> eight years later that I'm almost in the catbird's seat
> and the Aquatics Director of two pools.

He describes the fascination that working at the "Y" has for

him.

> Just the "Y" atmosphere in general. It's hard to
> explain. It's like not everybody can work in a "Y".
> It gets in your blood, it takes over, it's a feeling.
> It's something that you really can't explain, because
> you're not doing it for the money, and you're not doing

> it because it's stress-free. It's not even medium-level stress. It's <u>why</u> do you do it? If you evaluate working at a "Y", it'd be totally bad. But there's just something about it. And that feeling just got deeper and got rooted in you.

Eventually, he would like to work up into the management of the organization and become an executive director. He sees the "Y" as the place that can bring together several themes in his life:

> I like the contact with swimming. I can still deal with the kids and I still have a little touch with corporate America. And I like that. I like that mix.

RAYMOND

Toward the end of his interviews, Raymond states, "It's not everyone's dream to live their whole life in the ghetto . . .the whole objective is to get away from it." Raymond believes himself fortunate to be on the path out of the ghetto.

> I consider myself a very lucky person to have the opportunities that I have to do what I want to do. Being as where I grew up at, there was not that many promising outlooks on life. So I'm very lucky and I consider myself as being intelligent for one because, I mean, even though coming out of high school my grades didn't show, I know what I was talking about. But, I mean, I wasn't motivated to go to school, I didn't have that barrier around me to succeed, it was like if you wanted to you did, if you didn't no one really cared. I mean I consider myself as being a hard worker and a successor, can I use that, yeah, a successor.

Although growing up Raymond felt immersed in his environment, he sees himself leaving the ghetto and succeeding to a new life.

Raymond grew up in the projects of a major inner city.

He lived in a nice, single family home, that was "surrounded

by terrible things."

> If you walked outside and go two steps down the street,
> you're in section 8 type; if you walk up the street
> you're in section 8 type housing; you walk around the
> corner, you're in section 8 type housing. So it's like
> one little section of nice houses surrounded by the
> ghetto.

Yet, he doesn't regret growing up there, "I wouldn't trade

it for anything" and appreciates the lessons that he

learned, "the experience and the knowledge that you obtain

growing up there is so great that without it half of us

probably wouldn't make it."

Even though the family lived in a "nice house",

Raymond talks about growing up with a sense of poverty.

> I used to watch my parents the little time they were
> home; they worked three and four jobs and we still
> didn't have anything--and that always puzzled me
> because I couldn't understand how could one work so
> many times, so much out of a day and not have anything
> to show for it.

The family's economic situation is better now, "They've

stepped up since we'd been born. . . and now we're living

the fine line between comfortable and just making it. We're

comfortable now, you know?"

His mother has two jobs; she's a secretary and an

evangelist. His father is a crew chief for a utilities

company. His parents were divorced when Raymond was in the

ninth grade. The divorce was a relief for Raymond:

> I didn't like the way my father was running the
> household when he was there. When my father <u>wasn't</u>
> there, then we didn't have any restrictions that we
> had. So I became more involved in street life. In-
> house, I became a better person to get along with, but
> outside the house I just had it.

Raymond considers himself to be part of a large family.

> I only have two real brothers, like from my mother.
> And one real sister from my mother. The rest of 'em
> are from my father. But we don't even look at it like
> that. We're just brothers and sisters. We don't look
> at it like "Okay, that's my father, that's not my
> mother." I mean, it's beyond that. We're just one big
> family. All of us went to the same high school. I
> mean, it's . . we didn't have a problem as far as that
> was concerned.

Although his grandparents are still living, they live in

California and Florida and he has never met them.

As a young child, Raymond was very sickly; he would be

able to play for an hour and then have to rest. No one

realized how ill he was until he was about five years old

and ended up in the hospital.

> I had high blood pressure, bronchitis, asthma and my
> immune system was degrading. I was allergic to
> everything: dogs, cats, pollen, grass--everything. So
> from five to eight my parents kept a close eye on me.
> I stayed in the house and went back and forth to the
> hospital.

From five to eight years old Raymond was basically

housebound. He did not go to school but had a tutor come to

the house. He was not allowed to go outside to play; the

kids in the neighborhood came to the house to play with him.
After three years on medication, his condition began to
improve.

> I was able to go outside and run and start playing with
> everybody else. Then I started going to school with
> everybody else. And just enjoying life, I guess. Just
> happy to be outside and happy to be able to play
> without breaking down and getting tired.

By this time his mother had gone back to work; however, both
he and his brother were restricted to the house until his
sister came home from work at three o'clock in the
afternoon. Once outside Raymond would ride bikes with his
friends, or play basketball. He would stay outside until he
got tired "because my mother knew that we wasn't goin'
anywhere else but in the neighborhood and then the whole
neighborhood knew who we were, so we probably came in the
house around 11:00 [pm]."

His life began to change when he was around the ninth
grade. His parents had divorced, the restrictions in the
home were relaxed and Raymond began to spend even more time
on the streets.

> I had to prove myself. . .to, you know, the
> neighborhood, I guess you would call them bullies. And
> everyone was saying . . . Well, you know, my brothers,
> they're already known, but since I never came up--it
> was like I was the baby of the family. So as I started
> comin' up, people didn't realize the type of person
> that I was, and the type of attitude that I had, until
> they started testing me.

High school seemed to create an interesting dilemma for
Raymond. he wanted to play sports; yet, he didn't feel as
though he could leave the streets.

> Got into a <u>lot</u> of mischief as soon as I hit high
> school. Although I played sports and tried to stayed
> out of it, it was just around. You couldn't stay
> totally out of it. I mean, like for instance, the
> fights. Every now and then someone tries to test you,
> and they say it's good to walk away, but not all the
> time, because then it becomes never-ending. It becomes
> an everyday thing.
>   So me, I had a bad attitude. I never walked away
> from anything, and that got me in a lot of trouble that
> could have been avoided. But mischief? Oh! I did
> probably everything except for kill someone. But you
> could say I probably did everything. So yeah, you can
> say that. I've stolen cars; I've robbed; I've jumped
> people; helped my brothers fight; helped cousins fight-
> -pretty much everything. I've been locked up but never
> convicted. I'm glad now, because it'd probably held me
> back from some things. But I've been locked up a
> number of times.

Two events happened in the middle of his senior year that
began to change his outlook on life. The first event was
not taking part in a robbery:

> To be honest, I wanted to go; but my brother handcuffed
> me to the gate so I couldn't go. And it just so
> happened--all three of my friends got killed. So, I
> mean, they ran off the highway and crashed.

The second event was a murder:

> Now I've been around a lot of murders, but that was the
> first time I saw one. The very first. Before then
> I've been a witness of findin' people murdered, but
> that was the first time I've actually seen somebody get
> shot and die. Terrible. Wouldn't recommend it.

During this event, he was standing right beside the person who was murdered and "it kind of woke me up to what life was really about".

Raymond had three different sets of friends, academic [two teachers?], sports, and neighborhood. All of his friends were black; "I didn't start being around white Caucasians until I came to college." Raymond had two different groups of people influencing him as he grew up. The first group included his brothers and street friends.

> The best thing that you have are your friends and you basically end up doing what they're doing--because they're still living. Okay, so I mean, it might look bad to the outside world that this person is sitting outside doing nothing, not working but it doesn't look bad to the person that is with them everyday because so many of his other friends are gone and they might have been doing part of the things, but they're gone and you want to be like the person that still here because you figure he's been here this long whatever he's doing must not be too bad.
> In my place of residence it's either you kill or be killed. That's how the whole system works; there's no compromise in between. It's basically survival of the fittest--to sum it up. It's a bad way to live; it's a bad way to look at things, but it's reality.

The second group to have an influence on Raymond were a two of his high school teachers and his junior high school principal. His junior high school principal made going to school fun and made learning fun.

> The principal really started focusing--it was me and about six other guys that I used to hang with--she just focused on us and really she was just like a shadow making sure she came to get us to go to school. She sat through our classes for about really two years. And

after the two years we just started going, started
going every day, until I got to high school...She was
the only one that sat down and talked to us and really
showed any type of interest in us...She gave us rewards
for every A that we got on our report card.

The two teachers who worked with him in high school were his

Lifeguard Training instructor (who was also his swim team

coach) and his basketball coach. Raymond doesn't talk about

his basketball coach but he talks at length about his

lifeguarding instructor who would show him the obituary

column everyday.

He just sat down and told me the facts of life from
person-to person, rather than from teacher-to-student.
He talked to me like teachers don't talk to you. He
told me if I kept quote/unquote, "fucking up," then I
probably wouldn't be here too long. And if that's the
way I wanted to live my life, he wouldn't say nuthin'
else about it. But he said if I wanted to help better
myself a little, give him a call and he'd work with me.

At first Raymond got offended and tried to avoid his coach.

Eventually, he called the coach and asked him to come to a

football game to see him play which may have been Raymond's

way of asking for help.

Raymond did not like being in school. Once he started

elementary school in about the third grade, he rarely went.

Basically, I'd come to school at lunchtime; or I
wouldn't go. I'd just leave out the house and go round
the corner. I don't blame my parents for that because
they had no way of controlling that because they had to
work all the time."

He did better in junior high school because of the interest that the principal took in him. However, high school was another matter; "I figured I needed to go to school in order to play sports. So it wasn't a big deal."

> I was never in high school. I never went to school. I only went to school to socialize. School is a place of, more like a playground to me. I didn't take learning seriously. Mainly because I played football, basketball, and I swam, it wasn't an issue for me to really study. Because, what happened was, if I failed anything, I got it changed. So I didn't really concentrate on any type of studying. Even though I was not dumb, I just didn't want to do it.

For Raymond, the chance to play sports was the reason for school. He played football, basketball, ran track and swam. His involvement with sports "kept me out of more trouble." Sports provided a type of discipline. "I could not do nothin' else, meaning that once I finished those requirements for those sports, then I couldn't do nothin' else 'cause I was tired."

Raymond began to go to the pool with his friends when he was about 13. Before then, he and his friends considered the pool to be:

> A waste of time. Didn't feel like getting wet; water too cold; quote/unquote "fagots go to the pool"; it's not a place where you can meet girls; it's just like, outcasts go swimming. To be at the pool was like the worst thing in the world.

In addition, they were not allowed to go to the pool because their parents were afraid that they would drown. The

attitude toward the pool began to change when some of his
brother's friends became lifeguards. When he and his
friends went to the pool, they would go off the diving
board; "Not the swimming and splashing. We just went to
fall off the diving board all day." One day he went off
the high dive.

> I almost drowned. The very first time I jumped off the
> high dive. Mainly because I didn't know you were
> supposed to hold your breath. And I just panicked and
> I just stayed in the middle of the pool for about five
> minutes. I couldn't go anywhere. They thought I could
> swim because I was on top of the water. But I couldn't
> go anywhere.

Eventually, someone threw him a ring buoy and pulled him to
the side. His curiosity about swimming was triggered by
seeing the butterfly competition in the Olympics on TV; and
he couldn't understand how that stroke done.

> I started going to the pool and just imitating what
> they did and I couldn't go anywhere. So one of the
> lifeguards or the pool manager, he asked me, "did I
> want to learn how to do it?" and I said, "Yeah." And
> he said, "Well, okay, meet me here at seven o'clock
> everyday and I can teach you." So I came back at seven
> o'clock everyday and I learned how to do it. And for a
> while it was the only stroke I could do; but, I learned
> how to do that one and the other ones came afterwards.

His family and friends were fairly non-committal about his
swimming. "They didn't really care. I mean, it wasn't that
type--I mean it was like, "Okay, I gotta go swim."
"Alright, I'll see you later." It was nothing like, "You're
doing real good." It appears that a large part of his

determination to become a swimmer was fueled by a teacher during his ninth grade year who told him that he couldn't swim and couldn't take SCUBA diving.

> That's how I got into aquatics, he told me I couldn't swim; but I'd been swimming outside of high school for all my life because during the summer we went to the pool and I swam with the recreation. He told me I couldn't swim and I couldn't be a part of the scuba diving team because I didn't know how to do certain things.

During the tenth grade, Raymond took part in a Basketball Reading Incentive Camp in which the teens played basketball, football, and swam. At this time he caught the attention of the swim coach, the man who became a major influence in his life. The coach encouraged him to join the swim team and take lifeguard training. Raymond swam on the swim team for three years in high school and for two summers on a Parks and Rec swim team. His junior year in high school Raymond took SCUBA diving. After graduation, he quit swimming competitively because he was focused on basketball. He had been offered a basketball scholarship at a North Carolina university. Although he had not planned on going to college, he accepted the scholarship.

> So I went to college to play basketball. When I got in college, I didn't really want to do--I didn't have a major in mind, so I just went to class. Then I started getting interested in environmental aspects of engineering. So I started taking engineering. Basketball and engineering conflict, so I had to drop one; so I drop basketball. I mean, it was just whatever it had to be.

Raymond has since switched schools and is concentrating on finishing his environmental engineering degree.

Eventually Raymond wants to be an inventor, to create new products or technology; he does not want to be tied to a "real nine to five".

> I would like to sit here just like I am now and have a comfortable income from discoveries and inventions that I make--come up with. I really want my money to work for me instead of me having to work for my money. Meaning that hopefully I can come across some investments and start some businesses and maybe invent something to purify water. Basically, I just don't want to have to work to survive.

STEWART

Stewart, a theater major in college, unites creativity with performance in his description of himself.

> I've always been interested in, I guess, the creative aspects of anything. Art in general, and society, and even in aquatics. And largely I think my function in teaching is creative. It's almost a chance for me to perform, sometimes, but I think the kids respond pretty well to it.

Throughout the interviews, he talks about himself in relationship with others which is reflected in his hobbies. He is active in the theater and plays ultimate frisbee about six or seven hours a week. He tries not to watch TV but instead tries to read the newspaper every day. He is a "consummate coffee drinker in the morning" who never eats breakfast.

Stewart grew up in a suburb of a small city in western Virginia. His family's house was on a half-acre lot with:

> A couple of maple trees in front, some walnut trees in back, so it was a lumpy back yard. A swing set, basketball goal. Let's see, some magnolia trees that I kept running over with the lawn mower, especially as a teenager--some of my mom's more frightful moments. A big hill that we used to roll down along the side. Nice neighbors to each side of us, all around. We were on a hill. Our road was on a hill so we could do a lot of sledding and skateboarding down that road. And with a view of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

After he entered college his parents moved to the coastal area of Virginia. Visits to his parents seem strange because he doesn't know anyone where his parents are living now; however, since he wants to spend time with his "folks", he doesn't mind the change.

His father, an accountant, used to work for a manufacturing plant; he was laid off when the plant closed. Currently his father works for the government. His mother has worked as a secretary in mental health settings. His parents have always encouraged Stewart follow his interests.

> Both my parents have been very good about supporting me through anything--anything that I've ever wanted to do they've always supported me. Even if it's not what they would have chosen. I mean, even as a theater major, I mean, there aren't that many people who can decide and become a theater major and have your parents say, "Well, if that's what makes you happy then we'll do it together" So that's pretty good.

His mother is proud and supportive of his work particularly in aquatics.

> I don't know if she really understands a lot of why I'm
> doing some of the things that I'm doing, but she
> understands, I think, the capacity that I've been in
> aquatics. ...She constantly pats herself on the back
> for having pushed me in the first place to do those
> things, "If we hadn't pushed you to do swimming at such
> an early age you wouldn't be involved in this kind of
> thing now. Aren't you pleased with all the work that
> you've been doing?" So I think she's generally very
> pleased and supportive of what I'm doing now--the time
> I've spent in aquatics doing what I've done.

His father, however, has had the greatest amount of
influence on his development.

> He spent pretty reasonable time with me. He's almost
> always come out to the soccer games that I ever went
> to. He wouldn't miss it for no reason. It would have
> had to be a tremendous reason for him to miss it. He
> was always around the house. I mean, he's never been
> the person to sit still. I mean, he wasn't "Mom will
> cook dinner and do the dishes and the housework and he
> would always do. . ." I mean, he wouldn't cook much,
> and we were always thankful for that, but he'd always
> pitch in to do something. He was always doing
> something, listening, paying attention, helping out
> with homework, throwing a ball, and being interested.

Stewart has one brother who is a year younger. Stewart was
the more athletic of the two; however, it was his younger
brother's interest in the swim team that got him involved in
competitive swimming. The brothers fought growing up; yet,
they always had "a reasonably healthy respect for each
other", and they continue to keep in touch today.

Stewart learned to swim when he was about six or seven;
he calls himself the "worst student in the history of
aquatics".

> I remember sitting on the shallow end while all my
> other classmates were in the pool holding onto the wall
> and [I was] crying on the side for hours. And I would
> not get in the water, would not get my face in, would
> not go under water until he put Hershey's kisses--the
> instructor--I don't remember his name--down on the
> bottom of the pool, and they were one of my favorite
> candies. But I remember crying until all my friends
> went down to the bottom and gave me their candy. Later
> I went down to get it myself.

The next summer he took his deep end test and shortly after
that began swimming on the swim team. It was "my brother's
suggestion, and if he was going to do it then I needed to do
it." Although he didn't enjoy the swim team that much (his
favorite sport is soccer) he stayed with it for about eight
years.

> There are a lot of people at a lot of different pools
> that I'd met through my first year or two of swim team,
> that I became friends with. So it's partly the people
> that I met, and going to some of the swim meets, the
> fun afterwards. You know, your parents take you to
> dinner afterwards, and certainly the ribbons aren't
> bad.

He decided to quit swim team when he got his driver's
license and car. The neighborhood pool had closed down;
and, although he ended up at another pool where the team was
much better, he felt that he had lost his competitive edge,
so he quit.

He took advanced lifesaving because it seemed like part
of the natural swimming progression and would lead to a job.

> You could work at maybe McDonald's or something, but
> that didn't seem as interesting as lifeguarding. And

then you have your certificate and know that you can
get work and make some pretty good money and be outside
and be around pools in the summertime where all the
people are, at least your peers.

He worked as a lifeguard for one summer; the following

summer he worked at a car dealership doing odd jobs and

cutting grass. The next summer he went back to aquatics to

work.

I knew that after having experienced doing something
that I didn't really want to do, just seeing what the
other jobs were like, I knew that this was an
opportunity to get back outside to be in the water, to
wear shorts. The pay was a little bit better. After
my freshman year, I had my WSI so I started teaching
after that, and that became a blast to do. So I think
probably the level of responsibility increased and the
money increased, respect increased.

He describes his first save that occurred during that second

summer of lifeguarding. The save was a positive experience

in that it went well.

We had 14 lifeguards on duty. I was on the deep-end
chair and a little fellow got up the ladder, a bunch of
little kids had been going off the high dive, and they
can do it, and this little fella jumped in, couldn't
swim a lick. Just followed his friends and if you
can't swim, I would imagine just getting in the deep
end would be a problem. Going off the one-meter board
would be a major problem. So why he went straight to
the high dive, I have no idea.
    But he jumped in and he was in a little more than
a neutral position, neutral plus just a little bit, and
you know that he was drowning because they don't scream
for help they just look at you with these big wide eyes
and expect you to come do something. So I didn't use
any of my communication systems or rescue equipment, I
dove in--straight in--got him. By that time a friend
of his had jumped in--it was a double [drowning]--to
save him. And so the little kid had grabbed onto the

> other boy and I pulled--I blocked the one boy off of
> him and pulled--I blocked the swimmer off of him and
> pulled the non-swimmer over to the side. That felt
> pretty good to do that 'cause I saw it right as it
> happened and I just did it.

A save whether or not it goes 'right' is a memorable

experience and always affects the lifeguard even though

he/she may not be able to verbalize the effect. In this

case, Stewart indirectly integrates the effect that the save

had on him when he talks about the increase in

responsibility and respect.

For Stewart and his friends swimming was a natural

activity; everyone he knew swam either recreationally or

competitively. In the summer their life centered around the

pool--including breaking into pools at night to swim with

friends.

> Early on we spent all day at the pool. . . Chicken
> fighting, going off the board, a lot of sharks and
> minnows, a _lot_ of sharks and minnows. Outside of the
> pool that I grew up in, there was a _huge_ park. Back
> behind it, it was completely undeveloped. . . . So we
> spent a lot of time out there in those fields, and out
> there in the creeks and the woods back behind the
> places where--so it was more than the pool, it was just
> the setting and the familiarity of it--just for
> exploration. Get there and then travel back in the
> woods.

Even as a pre-teen and teenager (before he started working)

Stewart and his friends would spend all day at the pool or

in the woods. His mother was working at the time so after

the early morning swim team practice he and his friends

would sometimes go back to his house and play poker or play some games; and then return to the pool later in the afternoon. Around the age of 14, Stewart and his friends started drinking.

> We'd probably go over to somebody's house and probably
> have a six-pack. So we probably had a couple beers, as
> well, around that time, and _maybe_ go back to the pool.
> I learned _immediately_ how bad an idea that was. First
> time I ever drank a six-pack, got in the water and
> could not get out of the pool. . . It finally took me
> five minutes to figure out how to get out, went to the
> bathroom, spent the next five minutes there throwing
> up, came _back_ in the pool, did a little more swimming,
> then tried to ride my bike home, which wouldn't work.

In his account, Stewart never talks about being wild or about getting into trouble; however, he does state that lifeguarding and teaching helped him "make it through late adolescence and early twenties".

> Being responsible, I think, for other people--something
> completely outside of myself--realizing that I had an
> amazing potential that I didn't know existed in that
> form. So something that I was _really_ good at, that I
> could make a difference. I had to be responsible for
> people and I had people listening to me and paying
> attention to me and willing to work with me and
> learning and getting better. I realized that more than
> respect, evidently I was really effective at doing
> things. I think that made a big difference.

Stewart's growing up friends are included in his swimming story. His friends now do not associate him with aquatics, even though they know that he is an Assistant Aquatic Director of a "YW" program.

> I was at a friend's house who has a hot tub in his
> house, and I asked about the chemical system that he
> was using, whether he was using ozone or whatever, and
> my roommate who I've known since 1984, and my present
> roommate, we were suitemates then, said, "How do you
> know all that stuff about whirlpools?" And I go, "It's
> my job." He goes, "Oh, that's right." So he doesn't
> really associate me with the water that much at all.

By the same token, although he gets along well with his co-
workers, he maintains a work identity separate from his
social identity.

> I like the people and the way that they treat me and
> allow me to work, but a lot of things that are
> important to me don't really crop up and visa versa. I
> mean, there's nothing--there's definitely nobody with
> either political leanings like mine or social outlooks
> like mine. It's strange being here far away from my
> friends outside of here, and not have all those things
> I talk about after five o'clock or nine o'clock,
> whenever I get off, I don't talk about with people
> here, because I'll start getting into a conversation
> and realize I should probably back away.

In a way, participation in sports has been a means for
Stewart to integrate his private, his social and his work
identities. At one time the "YW" that he works for had a
swim team that he coached; and now, he helps swimmers from
other teams improve times through stroke improvement. In
addition, he currently plays on an ultimate frisbee team.
"We practice hard, four to six hours every week, playing
quite a bit." Growing up he played Little League football,
basketball, volleyball, swam and soccer. He liked soccer
better than swimming because it is more team oriented. In
fact, Stewart identifies his decision to play soccer as one

of the major decisions in his life.

> Soccer allowed me to do something that I hadn't been
> really interested in before. And it gave me another
> opportunity to do something that I didn't know I had
> potential or skills for. I met a lot of great people
> and I learned life-long skills through it, and I'm
> still probably running now just because of what my
> soccer coach did to me in high school."

Stewart played the other sports for fun. "I wasn't too concerned, I just went out there and played as hard as I could."

Stewart also defines his early interest in school in terms of being with others.

> It [school] influenced me partly because I was good at
> it earlier, gaining some tremendous relationships with
> people and made me feel valuable, a bit of self-worth.
> I've always been doing other extracurricular
> activities, so it gave me a chance to discover
> possibilities, more than anything.

Stewart enjoyed grade school and middle school. His teachers recognized the fact that he was a good student and "gave me a little more special attention. So I think that's probably one of the reasons why I liked school so much." However, for high school and the first two years of college, he tells a different story. "I kind of slacked off through high school, and through my first year [college] was a slippery-slip until the end of my sophomore year of college, at least gradewise." Yet, even though he was doing poorly in school, he would go home and "read something like a book called The

Chosen by Chaim Potock, and Kafka. . . I just maybe had
that imagination for something that didn't have anything to
do with grades." Now, he wishes that he had taken his early
college more seriously.

> I wish that I'd spent more time instead of partying and
> really, really learned. Because I had a wonderful
> opportunity but I don't think I took advantage of it.
> And that's the only thing that leans almost more toward
> regret and no other--nothing else comes even close.

The past couple of years he has been taking classes that are
the pre-requisites to get into an occupational therapy
program. However, he did not get into the program because
his grades "especially early on in college, were terrible."
He is interested in educational theater or using the "craft
of theater or mime" for therapeutic purposes. Right now, he
does not know how he will attain his goal. Stewart realizes
that the satisfaction he experiences from working with
others is an important part of successful work for him.

> I feel successful when I feel that I've done something
> well. Usually it's relative to other people being
> there. So it's--in some way if I have some impact on
> other people that are around me, and that's what makes
> me feel--the feeling that I've not let anybody down,
> for one; and two, that I've done something--something
> that's been positive.

Summary

Four African American and Four European American aquatic
leaders were interviewed about their experiences in and
perceptions of aquatics. Many factors about their

participation emerged from the narratives. The major factors included family support and influence of others, availability of training and on the job experiences.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS: RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND CROSS CASE ANALYSIS

This chapter investigates specific issues about aquatics and leadership in aquatics. In particular, the three framing questions will guide the analysis. The first part of the analysis will continue to be focused on the participant and will look at the question: What leads to the decision to become an aquatic leader? The second part of the analysis will focus on how the aquatic leaders view work in aquatics through the question: Do perceptions of aquatic leadership differ between European American and African American aquatic leaders? The third part of the analysis will use the question, What influences on aquatic leadership are identified by European American and African American aquatic leaders?, to take a more global perspective and evaluate some of the larger issues that influence participation in aquatics. Answers to these questions will help us understand the reasons that persons choose to enter or avoid the field of aquatics.

What leads to the decision to become an aquatic leader?

Four themes that emerged from the interviews in answer to this question included influence of others, experiences in training, perceptions of the job, and experiences on the

job. However, related to the decision to become an aquatic leader is the decision to leave the activity or field of aquatics. All but one of the participants talked about leaving aquatics, therefore, the decision to quit the field became another important theme to investigate.

Influence of others. A primary factor that emerged from the narratives as significant for participation in aquatics was the parental role. Parental support had a direct influence on participation through development of interest, encouragement, payment of lesson, club, and swim team fees, and location of a swimming facility or organization. Other family influences included the establishment of a disciplined routine (a structure and time frame of daily activities) and a recognition of achievement. Although these factors were not exclusive, if the parental support existed, interest seemed to be developed at an earlier age and maintained for a longer period of time.

In most cases parental support was evident in the facilitation of swim lessons, the promotion of swim team participation, and the suggestion to obtain lifeguard training. In all but one narrative, the initial introduction to swimming was arranged by the mother, often at a relatively young age. Earl and Kevin were started in swimming lessons at the age of three; David, Jerome, and Marcus began swimming about the age of six. Larry was enrolled in swimming lessons slightly later, at nine years

old; however, Raymond was thirteen when his interest in swimming was triggered by watching the Olympics on television.

The swimming lesson experiences that were reported in the learn-to-swim stories were mixed. The fact that we often remember bad experiences and assimilate good experiences is demonstrated in several of the narratives. Although David loved the water as a young child (he reports that he was in and out of the bathtub with his toy boat all of the time), he recounts two bad experiences in lessons in a community pool setting. He is amazed that he developed the trust in the beach lifeguards which would allow them to teach him to swim. Three of the other participants did not enjoy their first swimming experiences for one reason or another. Kevin bit his instructor, Steward cried the whole time, and Marcus hated the smell, the feel of the wet water, and the instructors. Although these young boys did not enjoy their first experiences, their parents continued to keep them in the water for several years of lessons. Larry, who began lessons at nine years old, realized that, although he liked the water, he had to overcome a fear of the water. Earl and Jerome enjoyed and felt success from their lessons from the very beginning. In particular, Earl describes a patient caring, African American instructor who insured his student's success. Raymond did not receive formal instruction, but received help from the pool manager of the

community pool. As Raymond progressed in swimming, his
natural curiosity began to guide his learning.

In three of the narratives, the parents were directly
responsible in getting the participants involved on swim
teams. Kevin, at five years old, was encouraged to join a
swim team in order to give him an outlet for his energy.
Stewart was encouraged to join the swim team along with his
brother who was the one interested in swimming. Larry's
mother encouraged him to join the swim team to be with his
friends. The other two participants who had swim team
experience (Raymond and David) were not encouraged or
supported by their families. Raymond participated in
swimming at school (lifeguard training, SCUBA, and swim
team) and on one of the summer recreational teams sponsored
by the city. David also participated on school and
recreational swim teams; he makes it clear that he paid for
his own participant fees.

Kevin, Raymond and David were the only participants who
were not encouraged by their parents to take lifeguard
training. Kevin who had been swimming competitively for
about 10 years was no longer interested in swimming but had
turned to other sports. David's desire to become a
lifeguard was initiated by his respect and awe of the beach
lifeguards who had taught him to swim. Raymond was
encouraged to take the course by the manager of the local
city pool so that he could get a job the next summer as a

lifeguard. Earl was encouraged by this mother to take lifeguard training before he was old enough to get his certification. By the time he was old enough, his parents had moved and participation in swimming through courses or an organization does not appear to have been an option. Jerome, encouraged by his mother, took the lifesaving through the Boy Scout aquatic weekends. He worked part of one summer as a guard for the Boy Scout camp; shortly thereafter, he quit both the Boy Scouts and aquatics for several years. Larry, Marcus and Stewart were encouraged to take lifesaving so that they could have a summer job that they enjoyed.

As a way of encouraging participation, parents in six of the narratives made arrangements so that swimming facilities would be available. The parents of Kevin, Larry, and Stewart joined private community swim and tennis clubs so that the boys could swim and participate on a swim team. The parents of Earl and Marcus built backyard pools so that the boys and their friends could swim. Jerome's mother made sure that he participated in the Boy Scout aquatic weekends to advance his skills.

In all cases, the participants were influenced by someone else to become a lifeguard. In five of the cases, the mother encouraged or directly suggested that the participant take the course; the primary reason given was for a job: "My mom said, "You ought to get a good job as a

lifeguard and save some money for going to college." . . .
so I took the course" (Larry). In addition to mothers,
other members of the family, brothers, and friends also
encouraged the participant. Earl had a brother who was a
pool manager and who convinced him to take the course so
that he could get an "easy job with flexible hours". Earl
also was encouraged by a friend to "pass your lifeguard
training, and you can get a job that pays $5-something an
hour and it's easy. You get to work with kids and see the
women." Jerome had friends who challenged him to take the
course with them; and Marcus had a friend accompany him when
he went for the lifeguard job interview.

Teachers were also influential in convincing the
participants to become lifeguards. For some of the
individuals (Marcus and Larry) the teacher's knowledge
excited their curiosity so that they wanted to learn more;
for other individuals (Kevin and Raymond) the teacher
provided challenges for the participant to meet: "he saw
that I had potential and he worked with me and taught me
things that other people, that I just couldn't learn out of
books" (Raymond). The last group of people to influence the
participants were the lifeguards and pool managers of the
facilities. "I always admired the lifeguards. I thought
they were the greatest things, better than sliced bread. . .
So that's why I became a lifeguard, because of them"
(David). Most of the influence provided by others was

positive; however, there were a few examples cited where participants took lifeguard training in spite of negative situations that they encountered. In one case, a teacher told Raymond that he couldn't swim or take swimming classes; in another case, Kevin hated the lifeguards at the pool because they "were not courteous; they couldn't give a damn." In general, the participants received positive encouragement from some outside person or persons to take the lifeguard training course and become a lifeguard.

Training. At the time of the interviews all of the participants had the American Red Cross certifications for CPR and Lifeguard Training. Some of the participants had taken addition training or had certifications through other agencies such as the YMCA or US Water Fitness. Table D3 in Appendix D summarizes the certification level of each participant. The training path toward certification is relatively uniform; CPR is required for Lifeguard Training; Lifeguard Training generally (but not always) is taken before WSI. The primary difference in training was in the level of preparation of the student at the beginning of the course.

A common observation that was made by all of the African American and only one of the European American aquatic leaders was that a majority of the students in the class could not swim when they first entered the Lifeguard Training courses. Larry stated, "We were all non-swimmers";

Jerome observed, "A lot of them couldn't swim, probably never had any instruction in swimming". However, the instructors worked with the students so that the majority were able to pass, "just come in a half-hour early, or stay a little later and I'll work with you" (Earl). Most of the participants respected and were impressed by their instructors. Marcus noted that the instructor took time to see that skills were done correctly. "We had to do it right, the cross-chest carries and the releases especially...It had to be one, two, three--you couldn't be sloppy. You did it again or you didn't pass." Larry mentioned the professional nature exhibited by the instructor in the second course he took, "the course was organized, it was thorough and we knew that we could do it when we finished." He then contrasted that course with an earlier course in which the instructor permitted the class to "go through the motions and take the test" and that he "gave more attention to the girls. The boys in the class, we didn't make a whole lot of difference. We were just there". In addition to emphasizing good skills and knowledge, the participants were impressed by the fact that the instructor challenged the student while making the student feel good.

> He could get in the water with us, and no matter whether it was me or somebody who was fifteen years old and very timid, . . . he could make you feel like you were in control of the situation, no matter whether you were or weren't. And he was a large man. (Kevin)

In general, the participants relayed positive experiences about their training. They appreciated the time and effort that the instructors put into the course and they try to pass that on in their own work. "If you're going to teach someone to save someone else's life, then you need to do it right" (Marcus).

Perceptions of the job. When they started to lifeguard, most of the participants had no concept of who a lifeguard is or what a lifeguard does. The participants had been encouraged to obtain their Lifeguard Training certification in order to work; but, as Stewart stated, most did not have "any expectation of what a lifeguard was or what a teacher was. Just going to sit, as far as I cared, and make a little money. It seemed like a relatively easy job." The first aspect of the job that made it appealing was that it was "a fun job"; that it appeared easy and not stressful. "You got to sit out in the sunshine, had a lot of friends around" (Stewart). Another aspect was flexible scheduling that allowed the participants who were students to go to class and study and allowed the participants who were teachers to work during the summer. In addition, there is a sense that jobs will always be available, "There'll always be pool open so I'll always have a job—even if I got fired from everywhere. I can still go back and be a lifeguard" (Raymond). In addition, several of the participants mentioned a sense of glamour to the job; to be

a lifeguard was to be in control: "you were in charge. What the lifeguard said was law" (Larry). However, of the various aspects mentioned, the most prevalent reason to go into lifeguarding was that lifeguarding appeared to be easy and fun.

The lifeguards themselves were known and respected, generally, for their swimming abilities. Lifeguards were seen wearing shades, sitting in chairs or guard stands, above everybody else at the pool, and waiting "for a drowning or somethin'" (Jerome). In addition, they would blow a whistle and enforce the rules. Some of the participants reported that the guards were courteous and friendly and enforced the rules fairly, "they kind of treated us kids like family" (Larry) and played with the kids. Kevin and Stewart reported that the guards were mean and "tortured" the little kids; "they'd throw us out when we got too worrisome, too difficult" (Stewart); and "I can remember when I sat out thirty minutes at a time. I'd be sittin' there while they'd send the other person back in the water" (Kevin). The only other thing that the participants remember the lifeguards doing was testing the water occasionally. "I think they kind of _had_ to be there, but I don't remember them doing _anything_ at all" (Kevin). To the participants the lifeguards appeared to be powerful persons who did little and who had fun. They were idolized by several of the participants and it is not surprising that the participants would want to be "just like them" (David).

Experiences on the job. Overall, the experiences on
the job were different than expected. "Lifeguarding is
great, once you get started and all of a sudden, after the
third month or so, you say, "this is it! This is all it'll
ever be," and it's really boring" (Marcus). And in fact,
Marcus further reports that he doesn't like to swim. Yet,
all but two of the participants have stayed in the field for
three years or longer; and Marcus, who doesn't like to swim,
has worked in aquatics for eight years. In the interviews
the participants identified three types of experiences that
kept them involved in aquatics. The first experience was
the fun of teaching. "Every time we get a kid in the water,
they'll make you laugh; they'll make you enjoy yourself"
(Marcus). The chance to help others out, to make a
difference in someone's life, gives purpose to their lives
as teachers and guards; "You're giving instruction to the
kids so they'll be water safe" (Earl).

The next experience mentioned was the responsibility
and respect the participants received while on the job "from
the kids who come to the pool. . .always looking up to you
to do something or for words of wisdom" (Larry). The
challenge of making the facility a safe place to come and
showing others how to enjoy the pool safely contributed to
that sense of respect. In general, the participants believed
that most of the children and adult patrons respected their
role as lifeguard; however, they questioned the respect that

they received from management. Other participants noted the personal satisfaction they got from being able to do job skills well. Although swimming rescues are not common occurrences, a successful save provides an enormous boost in confidence. Likewise, an unsuccessful save can devastate a guard.

The third type of experience cited was the work itself. Stewart, who had worked other jobs stated, "I knew that after having experienced doing something that I didn't really want to do, just seeing what the other jobs were like, I this was an opportunity to . . .get back in the water." He wanted the chance to work outside and to wear shorts. Marcus noted that working in aquatics has a totally different atmosphere to it; and he attributes this atmosphere to being able to work with the kids. Earl saw the work as a type of management training:

> I got first-hand view of seeing how things should be done, how I can do them to make them better, how other people will do them. How to work with people and stuff in a business sense. How to learn with not having the resources to get what you want. . .learn how to adapt. . . coping with people, the public relations, and stuff like I never thought of before. (Earl)

The two experiences that seemed to contribute most to the sense of job satisfaction were the fun the participants had working with the children at the pool and the feeling that they were making a difference in the lives of the children.

The decision to leave aquatics. Six of the participants left aquatics for a time and then returned later to work as guards and/or instructors. The four participants (Kevin, Stewart, Jerome, and Earl) who stopped swimming during high school quit for two main reasons; they either felt burned out and had lost their competitive edge or they wanted to do different activities. When they dropped out of swimming, they usually switched to other sports, (football, basketball, etc). In addition, they started "hanging" or, after getting a car, "cruising" with their friends. "I was just getting in high school. I had quit the Scouts. . .So I guess I got more into what they [his friends] was doing back then. . .Just hangin' out. Just being teenagers" (Jerome). However, within three years and with encouragement from others, they had all taken the Lifeguard Training course and become lifeguards. "I was thinking about, "What's a way that I can make money?" Okay, I can use my talents as far as swimming..." (Earl). The other two participants (Marcus and David) stopped working in aquatics for a time because they had gotten burned out. "So I was doing all the classes. And at that point, I burned out. And so I had to take a whole semester off where I didn't even get in the water" (Marcus).

All but two of the participants talk about why they see themselves quitting aquatics in the future. The most often cited reason was that they would have to leave aquatics in

order to achieve the goals that they had set for themselves. "I'm about to start my own business in a year. And so I'm going to stray away from it [aquatics] for a while. . . to do anything in aquatics or working with children . . . that's just extracurricular stuff" (Earl). The next most often cited reason was the politics of management which included issues of pay, communication and trust. All of the participants mentioned the low pay in aquatics. "I don't understand why lifeguards get minimum wage or a little bit more here because you're dealing with lives--and all they get is five, $5.25, I think, to guard your life? That's ludicrous" (Raymond). And "if it doesn't pay the enough money to pay the bills then I'm going to have to go find some other source of income to pay the bills" (Earl).

Problems with communication and trust were also cited as potential reasons to leave aquatics. "You may not like the people that you're working with, and it may be racial or whatever... " (Earl). Raymond stated: "And then again...I don't know who to trust or not trust...The simple fact that I don't really know him and in my mind is like, "Don't trust anybody that you really don't know." You see what I'm saying?" All but one of the participants expressed concerns about the bureaucracy and the good-will of management; and, Marcus was definitely in a difficult situation in which he was not sure of the cooperation that he would have at any given time.

B. hasn't asked us to pull anything off city wide, but I'd have to go through both execs first to do it. Here I am, entry-level position running two branches and aquatics, under the exec at A. at the same time I sit over the exec as chair of a committee and report directly to the CEO. It's interesting. It's a challenge. . . And at times I get pulled in both directions. (Marcus)

The final reason cited was the degree of risk that went along with the job. In particular, the issue of liability was mentioned often: "Every time we have someone in the pool we're responsible for their life" (Earl) and that a release would be a good idea, "they have to bring a piece of paper or form signed by their parents saying it's okay—something to cover that loophole [injury and lawsuit], because I think they're taking advantage of it" (Raymond). Additional hazards faced by aquatics personnel everyday include strong chemicals, and blood borne pathogens. "Aquatics Director? I don't know. . . it's an alright way to make a living but there's too many risks and there's too many things that can go against you" (Raymond).

In spite of the huge responsibility, low pay, and serious hazards and risks involved in aquatics, the participants continue to be enticed by the work. "I _love_ aquatics, and frankly, even if I work another job, I want to teach at night" (Stewart). The negative aspects of the work, at least for now, are balanced by the sense of making a difference, the satisfaction that comes from helping others and the fun of teaching children and adults to swim.

<u>Do perceptions of aquatic leadership differ between European American and African American aquatic leaders?</u>

Three themes in aquatic leadership that the two groups of participants perceived in similar ways were the current image of a lifeguard, patron interactions, and the importance of appropriate skills and knowledge. Although these three themes were identified by both sets of participants, there were some variations within the topics of each theme. The theme of trusting staff was perceived differently by the two groups of participants. However, the same basic frustration (financial limitation) was identified by both groups of participants. Although many of the basic perceptions of aquatic leadership that were held by the participants were similar, in several instances each group emphasized different aspects of those perceptions.

<u>Current image of a lifeguard</u>. This particular section showed the greatest uniformity of opinion between the two groups. Both African American and European American aquatic leaders believed that the current perceptions about lifeguarding in particular (and of work in aquatics in general) were unrealistic. Although they did not make the connection specifically, the participants are acknowledging the fact that the current image of a lifeguard is similar to the perceptions that they themselves had when they began working in aquatics. Many participants emphasized that lifeguarding was "not what the kids [first year lifeguards]

expected" (Marcus) and that the work was hard and "not glamorous" (Kevin). The European American aquatic leaders noted that many beginning lifeguards were unaware of the serious nature of the work, "they don't realize that you could lose somebody" (David). They believed that the Lifeguard Training Instructors need to redefine lifeguarding for their students so that only those students who would be willing to accept the responsibility would work as guards.

Patron interactions. Both groups of participants agreed on several themes that emerged with respect to patron interaction. They agreed that the lifeguard served as a role model for the patrons in the pool. " 'Cause I know that being a lifeguard, if you start screwing up and around the pool, then the kids will always do that, and you'll spend all your day trying to correct the things that you've done" (Raymond). All of the participants realized that the patrons would copy their misbehavior and that lifeguards had to be lifeguards all the time. However, they noted that some of their staff did not realize the importance of being a good role model.

> They think it's just sitting in the chair for your time
> and then get out and you go do whatever but that's not
> the case. You're supposed to be a lifeguard for the
> whole time that you're at work and most lifeguards
> don't understand that. (Raymond)

In addition to being a role model, both groups of participants talked about the importance of using tact and

establishing good relationships with the patrons. "On a
good day you have about 60 or 70 kids that you have to deal
with. You have to deal with attitudes, you have to deal with
personal situations" (Raymond). Arguments get started
quickly over spilled drinks and who has the next turn on the
diving board. Some of the patrons feel as though they have
to "feel your water. They have to feel how much they can
push you. . . I try a little more tact whereas without any
tact, it'd be just straight blow-out" (Kevin). David
recounted a situation in which his manager's intervention
lessened the consequences of his rash response.

> And what I did was, I pulled my "street attitude" on
> her. It was like a knife. I didn't cuss, I just said
> a couple of things. . . And my manager took me into her
> office, and we sat down and talked about it. (David)

Several of the participants (Larry, Earl, Marcus, David)
noted the tendency of the lifeguards to distance themselves
from the patrons; the guards would sit at a separate table,
take money, blow their whistle, but not talk to the children
person to person. Instead, at least one of the participants
encouraged his staff to go out of their way to know the
kids, "to joke around with them and have fun with them
because they'll see you as a slight role model; he's doing
good in life; he doesn't drink; he doesn't do drugs"
(Earl). Both groups of participants felt that through their
interactions with the children they could make a difference

in their lives. The participants saw their actions as a means of helping others develop and build confidence. They felt as though they were establishing a sense of connectedness with children who don't receive much attention: "And I'm not talkin' about spoiling a child, I'm talking about addressing their basic needs like, "I'm scared, I don't really understand this". . . I think that a lot of these children bring this with them" (David).

An additional aspect of patron interaction that was expressed by all of the participants was a sense of responsibility for the patrons' lives. One approach that is used to protect the lives of the patrons is by enforcing the rules of the facility. Although both groups saw rule enforcement as an important aspect of patron interaction and patron safety, a difference existed in the way the two groups of participants enforced the rules. The African American aquatic leaders discussed rule enforcement as a preventive measure: "It's better to prevent something from happening than to actually have something happening" (Marcus). They tried to keep the pool "relatively calm" (Raymond) so that they didn't have to act. They would stop fights and try to make sure that the children followed some guidelines or some rules.

On the one hand, the African American participants indicated that they had a tendency to allow the children more latitude, and then stopped the activity whenever they

felt that there was a danger of someone getting injured. On the other hand, the European American aquatic leaders discussed enforcing the rules fairly and enforcing the same rules all the time for everyone. As soon as they saw an infraction of the pool rules, these participants wanted the lifeguards to stop the activity and talk to the patron. "You treat 'em fairly, but you gotta be firm. You can't let them do anything that you're not going to let everybody else do" (Kevin). Because these participants used a strict interpretation of the rules, they often had problems when dealing with the general public. "You run into people who think they're gonna do it their way no matter what. . . and when you point out a rule that they broke, then they don't particularly like it" (Larry). Therefore, although both groups of aquatic leaders believed in rule enforcement, they defined that enforcement differently.

Skills and knowledge. Both groups of participants emphasized the need for good skills and knowledge; however, the only the European American aquatic leaders mentioned the need for further training after the lifeguards and/or other staff were hired. "I'm the lifeguarding supervisor, so I hire all the staff. I train the staff. . . . I make sure that they have everything they need to do their job" (Stewart). Some of the training involved the decision making process and the ability to make intelligent decisions, the knowledge of how and when to take the

initiative, and reviewing skills so that "everybody knows what to do and are doing what they're supposed to be doing" (Larry). The African American aquatic leaders emphasized the need for the staff to have good skills, but did not mention further training that they did with their staff. A "decent" guard or instructor is someone who is "prepared, like with their certifications" (Raymond). Once on the job, these managers expected their staff to solve problems on their own: "Don't come to me for every single thing that needs to be done. No, I want you to try to solve it yourself" (Earl). Whereas the African American aquatic leaders expected their staff to come to the job with a good background of skills and knowledge, the European American aquatic leaders expected to train their staff so that they would "know what to do" (Larry).

Trust. The issue of training the staff also ties into the issue of trusting the staff. The African American aquatic leaders tended to trust their staff and to give them some ownership of the job so that the staff would feel more a part of the facility and "get them to the point where they want to stay and they want to do this" (Marcus). The European American aquatic leaders tended to supervise their staff more closely and to provide greater direction: "I realize the necessity of coming in and telling them they have to. . ."You've gotta do this; you've gotta do that." That's something that I've had to work on" (Stewart).

These participants noted that instead of guarding many lifeguards would talk to friends, not scan the pool, and enforce rules for some of the patrons and not for others. "They'll go ahead and manipulate you into thinking that they're doing a good job, but their not doing a good job" (David). However, not all guards were seen as untrustworthy by the European American aquatic leaders; but there was a criteria by which the guards were evaluated: "The ones that you respect are the ones who do what you think that lifeguards are supposed to do" (Larry).

Frustrations. Both groups of participants expressed the similar frustration of limited financial resources. The issue of pay was a major concern. Only Larry stated that "for what they're expected to do, the lifeguards, the assistant managers, the managers can do well in the jobs that we have moneywise. . .I think they're [salaries] very fair for what they [aquatics leaders] do there." All of the other participants felt that "it's not worthwhile to be a lifeguard" (Earl) because of the relatively high cost of training ($140.00), low pay and the minimum respect received from both the public and the administration. "For a lifeguard to earn his keep in the eyes of the public, or the administration to say "you are worth more money", you're going to have to make a save every day" (Marcus). Yet the primary concept in lifeguarding is prevention of accidents.

> I remember just the other day I got home and my wife says, "Well, how did it go today?" And I said, "I had 366 people in the pool and not a single accident." And that makes me feel good, when we can have people to enjoy the pool safely. (Larry)

The issue of pay was also related to the privilege of hiring (and firing) the staff. Only two of the participants had the authority to hire and fire staff; however, even they were limited by financial constraints. "How do you get the programs to be bigger and better if you can't go out and get your people certified, or go out and hire people who are certified, for more money?" (Marcus). Larry simply wanted "a bit more say-so about the lifeguards who are hired. I would like for them to talk to me before they are hired." Other participants who had problems with one or more of their guards were equally frustrated. ". . .I could nct take the matters into my own hands and go ahead and dismiss the individual. I had to wait on my supervisor to dismiss this individual. And it made for a bad situation. . " (Kevin). Another related issue involved the size of the staff hired to run the facility:

> Well, they depend on you to run the pool. . .and then either don't give you adequate manpower to complete the job thoroughly, or overwork you to the point where you get burnt out so bad you don't feel that you're doing an adequate job and you feel bad about yourself. (Marcus)

The final major frustration with the administration was in the restraints put on the participants. "I don't like it

when I'm not allowed to work, when I'm not allowed to make decisions" (Stewart). Lack of vision, reticence to accept new programs and an unwillingness to give up old ways especially puzzled those participants who were hired to revitalize a program. "But there are so many restraints here. Hands are tied my legs are tied. And you talk only when they tell you to. And again, it's financial. But because it's financial, everything you do is held back" (Marcus).

There are many similarities in the way that the two groups of participants perceived aquatic leadership. Both groups of participants agreed that the current image of the lifeguard needed to be redefined to a more realistic image. The participants also agreed that the lifeguard served as a role model for patrons in the facility and that lifeguards needed to establish positive relationships with the patrons. They also agreed that pool personnel needed to create a safe, caring environment for the children who came to the facility.

Although the participants agreed that the lifeguard had a responsibility for the patrons' lives, they had different opinions about how that responsibility could best be carried out. Again, both groups emphasized the need for good skills and knowledge, however, they had different perceptions about the role of the manager in providing that training. Both groups expressed the same basic frustration with the

financial constraints that were placed on them. They felt that those constraints limited the effectiveness of the program that they were able to deliver. Finally, the one major difference between the perceptions of the two groups was the issue of trusting the staff. The African American aquatic leader tended to be more trusting of his staff than the European American aquatic leader.

What influences on aquatic leadership are identified by European American and African American aquatic leaders?

Four influences on aquatic leadership identified by the aquatic leaders were: (a) role models and community expectations; (b) stereotypical beliefs about African Americans in aquatics; (c) opportunities for participation; and (d) economic factors. Although several of the participants believed that some of the patterns of participation were beginning to change, they maintained that the change was very slow and that these four influences still had a strong effect. All of the participants noted that before someone could become an aquatic leader they had to take and pass a lifeguard training course. The swimming requirements to enter the course necessitate a certain familiarity with the water and a particular level of swimming skill. General requirements include the ability to swim distance (500 yards), tread water for a specified time, retrieve a brick from the bottom of the deep end of the

pool, and swim a distance underwater. Becoming an aquatic leader first requires that one become a swimmer; therefore, the influences that were identified in this section focused more on overall participation in aquatics than on the specific topic of aquatic leadership.

Role models and community expectations. Three types of role models that were identified by the participants were national sports figures, neighborhood peer leaders, and lifeguards. Of the three groups, national sports figures and neighborhood peer leaders appeared to have the stronger effect in the African American neighborhood. National sports leaders were thought to have a major effect because of their pay and media exposure; "Contracts are being negotiated quite openly, you know, "So-and-so gets $4.5 million over a three-year period." "Hey, I wanna do that!" It's seen as a way out of the ghetto" (Earl). National sports figures were also considered an influence in that many children adopted these "dream dads and moms" (Earl) as people to follow; yet, the children don't realize the work that it took for these sports figures to attain their goals. "Today they just try to dress like 'em. They'll go buy the shoes, the outfits, and some of 'em really don't even have the skills. And it's just unrealistic, because they don't even work for it" (Jerome). The emphasis with the national sports figures was viewed with concern by all the participants because of the tendency of the children to set goals that could not be attained.

The neighborhood peer leader was an influence through reputation and money in the public housing and working class neighborhoods. The children in these neighborhoods see the drug dealer who is "making some money and all this other stuff. The hype is built around him" (Raymond). The person who is "working a good nine-to-five job, he's not going to be living in the projects, so he's going to be around a different community of kids" (Earl). The fact that the children in the projects see adults either struggling to make a living or dealers with large sums of cash reinforces the hype of the neighborhood peer leader. The person with a regular job is rarely respected as noted by one of the participants who was told, "Okay, you got a job, I mean, I make more money that you just doing what ever" (Raymond). Again, the emphasis on easy money and the lack of emphasis on work was viewed with concern by all of the participants.

Although the participants realized that national sports figures and neighborhood peer leaders had a relatively strong influence on many of the children who came to the pool, they believed that lifeguards could also have an effect. The influence of the lifeguard was judged to be stronger in the European American neighborhood, however, the African American participants believed that they, too, could have some influence on the children who came to their pools. "We are like mini role models to the kids that come to the pool all day. It gives them another outlet, something else

they can try to do" (Earl). Both sets of participants recalled similar ways that the lifeguards influenced them when they were younger: "I idolized them. I wanted to be like them" (Larry); "They were like family and friends" (Stewart); "They encouraged folks that I hung out with to do something positive" (Earl); and "They took an interest in certain people, certain kids, and worked with them individually and privately" (Raymond). Both groups of participants believed that lifeguards could have an influence on the children who came to the pool but that it depended on "if we apply it. If we don't apply it, we have no impact at all" (Marcus). Therefore, all of the participants made an effort to get to know the children who came to their pools, and to encourage them to learn new skills.

The expectations of the community varied between the two groups of participants. The European American aquatic leaders reported that swimming was a "natural" activity in their communities. Swimming was an everyday pastime; the pool was the place to be and all of their friends swam. The African American aquatic leaders reported that when they were growing up "going to the pool was a cardinal sin. I mean, people just didn't do it" (Raymond). Their friends would play basketball on the court close to a pool and never go to the pool. Although their friends did not swim, they did not prevent the participants from swimming, "It wasn't

peer pressure, it was just, "Okay, see you later." That's how it was" (Raymond). Consequently, the African American aquatic leaders developed multiple sets of friends, "Usually if I'd swim, it was with my cousin, or someone I was in the Scouts with, somebody that knew how to swim. Most of my other friends in high school and elementary school didn't know how to swim" (Jerome).

In the European American community both the role models and community expectations tended to emphasize participation in swimming; and the influence of the lifeguards tended to reinforce that participation. However, in the African American community most of the role models and community expectations emphasized participation in sports and activities other than swimming; and the influence of lifeguards tended to work against community norms. Although swimming was not completely discouraged, those African Americans who chose to swim developed multiple sets of friends.

Stereotypical beliefs about African Americans in aquatics. Two stereotypes, that African Americans are not interested in swimming and that African Americans can't swim, were identified in the data. Although several of the European American aquatic leaders reported the belief that African Americans were not interested in swimming, only one of the European American participants seemed to accept the idea on the basis that there were not that many African

Americans who had the knowledge to run an aquatics facility

and that the African American community pushed sports other

than aquatics. The other three European American aquatic

leaders dismissed the idea; "If you bring those kids here,

they love it. They have a great time" (Larry). The African

American aquatics leader also dismissed the idea that

African Americans were disinterested in swimming:

> They're (other African Americans) kind of curious,
> because all of a sudden it brings up something that
> they've probably never done, or they want to do, so
> they're like, "Gosh, you know how to teach swimming
> lessons?" I say, "Yes." "I need you to teach me how to
> swim." (Earl)

With some amusement the African American aquatic

leaders talked about the belief that "Blacks can't swim" and

the reactions that they receive when other people, both

European American and African American, discover that they

are in aquatics.

> The reaction is pretty much the same. Because the
> European Americans, they'll look at me and say, "Well,
> you're an aquatic director. What's a black guy doing,
> being an aquatic director." And the blacks will look
> at me and say, "You're an aquatic director, huh? What's
> a black guy doing as an aquatic director?" (Marcus)

Other African American aquatic leaders noted that, because

of the stereotype, many African Americans had never tried

swimming; and they simply bought into the idea that there

was no way that they could learn to swim. African Americans

were not the only persons to believe the stereotype. One of

the European American aquatic leaders noted that this particular stereotype seemed to fulfill a white "prophecy" and justify the lack of swim lessons in the African American community:

> I've heard more that one person say this: "Black people can't swim a lick--because they sink." Well, they might have to work at it a little bit more, but they can swim, and they can learn to swim well. (David)

Although most of the participants did not give credit to either stereotype, only one participant talked about the ways in which the stereotypes limited participation in aquatics.

Opportunities for participation. Two aspects were identified under opportunities for participation. These aspects included access to a facility and access to a program.

David noted that "swimming is a skill which requires a pool or some sort of body of water with a trained instructor"; without access to both of those components, a person will not learn efficient swimming. Larry pointed out that when he learned to swim the public pool was "totally white" and he was "not even sure that the blacks had a pool"; therefore, historically, many African Americans had limited access to swimming pools. He states that the situation began to change in the late sixties; although Marcus, one of the African American participants, placed the

date in the early eighties. The participants agreed that
gradually more African Americans were beginning to swim;
however, access to pools was still somewhat limited.
"There's about twenty-some pools for the white population to
swim in and only three for the black community" (Larry).

Lack of transportation was identified as an additional
problem of access. "A lot of black families, they're
working like two and three jobs so they don't have time to
take their kids out and carry them swimming. . .Plus, they
don't have the transportation" (Kevin). Therefore, if the
children want to go swimming, they often have to ride their
bicycles across several neighborhoods in order to get to a
pool. Jerome stated that, although he had a place to swim
in the lakes and ponds around his house, many of his friends
who lived in the city did not have access to a pool.

Both groups of participants described the sense of
community within the pools that they did attend. Pools in
the European American community were characterized by the
participants who used them as having a sense of community
that was created by family participation. "My dad would get
in the water and swim, my mom would do a little sidestroke.
But they were always there at the pool" (Stewart). The
parental involvement made going to the pool at family
affair. In the pools in the African American neighborhoods,
the lifeguards established a sense of community by paying
attention to and helping develop the skills of the children.

The parents of the children these neighborhoods are rarely present at the pool:

> I've seen a lot of kids, five, six and seven, responsible for kids who are two and three, which makes for a bad situation too, because these kids five, six and seven may not be able to swim, and I <u>know</u> the kids who are two and three can't swim. (Kevin)

In addition to access to the pool, another factor that influenced participation in aquatics was access to swim lessons or to swim team. Several of the participants noted that in one city swimming lessons were taught in the "White" pools which were across town from the African American neighborhoods; and anyone who did not have transportation would be unable to participate. Other participants noted that "the programs that are there in the African American communities; there aren't that many that involve swimming" (David). Two of the African American participants (Earl and Jerome) stated that they would have joined swim teams if they had been made available to them. Access to the facility and to the program was only one obstacle to be overcome; the ability to pay for the facility or program was another.

<u>Economic factors</u>. Four economic factors were identified as possibly influencing participation in aquatics. Three of the factors, pay, facility cost, and activity cost were identified by both groups of participants. One additional factor, the cost of equipment, was identified by the African American aquatic leaders.

Low pay was mentioned previously as a reason for aquatic leaders to leave the field; however, both the African American and European American participants believed that the low pay in aquatics also discouraged many people from entering the field; "So actually, if it pays great then they're interested in it. If it doesn't. . ." (Earl). The aquatic leaders realized that they worked in aquatics for reasons other than money, "The people who do it have to do it because they love it" (Marcus). The participants also noted that people had to try aquatics before they could realize that they enjoyed aquatics; and for people to try aquatics several other economic factors had to be overcome.

One of the primary factors mentioned was the cost to enter the swimming facility. The participants noted that every facility had either a membership fee or an entrance fee. Although memberships to the Y's are relatively inexpensive, they are often more than many lower income families can manage; and the cost for entrance fees can quickly build up. "I didn't really think about it until this summer; seventy-five cents to some of these kids is a lot of money. If they don't have the seventy-five cents, they can't swim" (Larry). For families with more than one child, the seventy-five cents per child entrance fee becomes even more prohibitive. For more affluent families, the entrance fee is generally less of a problem. In addition to the public pools, the more affluent families usually join

the Y's, or the private swim clubs. Occasionally, the more affluent family will have a pool in the backyard.

In addition to facility cost the participants identified activity costs for swimming lessons or for swim team. Swim team costs are generally high; David estimated that a local year-round swim club cost about $1500.00 for annual dues. Swimming lessons were also noted to be relatively expensive:

> We charge $30.00 for swimming lessons now. And again, $30.00 is a big chunk for some families. I've noticed, several years ago, it was only like $15.00. And when we jumped to $30.00, we were making more money, teaching swimming lessons, but we've also cut out a lot of the lower economic families. (Larry)

Without the money to pay for lessons, children from lower income families get little chance to develop the aquatic skills necessary for lifeguard training.

> But again, to <u>learn</u> those skills, you have to be exposed and have a lot of experience in the water before you start. . . They might come several times during the summer, but it is not enough to practice, to become efficient, to even pass the prerequisite for lifeguard training. (Marcus)

The last economic factor, cost of equipment, was identified by the African American participants. In addition to cost of facility and lessons, the participants noted that swimmers needed to have a minimum of one bathing suit, a towel, and probably goggles. "But we can sure afford to get one football and play with that every day for

years to come, out in the free back yard and play
basketball. . . but swimming is continuous funding" (Earl).

The primary economic factors that were identified as
an influence on participation in swimming were facility
cost, activity cost, and cost of equipment. Although pay
was identified as a factor that discouraged people from
entering the field of aquatics, it was not identified as a
factor that limited participation.

The participants identified four primary influences on
participation in aquatics and ultimately on participation in
aquatic leadership. The effect of role models and community
expectations was different in the two communities. In the
European American community, the role models and community
expectations tended to reinforce participation in aquatics;
in the African American community, participation in aquatics
was somewhat discouraged. Both groups of aquatic leaders
agreed that the perpetuation of the beliefs that African
Americans could not swim and were not interested in swimming
also negatively influenced the participation of African
Americans in aquatics. The availability of and the ability
to pay for programs and facilities also had a big effect on
participation.

Summary

The decision to become an aquatics leader appears to be
influenced by support of others, experiences in training,

perceptions of the job and experiences on the job. Of these four the support of others and the perceptions of the job appeared to have a stronger influence. However, the experiences on the job often determined whether or not a person remained an aquatic leader. Both groups of participants held the same perceptions about the current image of a lifeguard. They were concerned that the image of a lifeguard that was held by many young adults who were interested in aquatics was erroneous and should be changed.

The participants agreed that patron interaction was a large part of the job. Patron interaction included serving as a role model for and establishing good relationships with the participants in the facility. Responsibility for patrons lives was judged by the participants to be of primary importance to the job; however, the two groups differed on rule enforcement. The European American aquatic leaders appeared more strict in enforcement of rules than the African American aquatic leaders. Both participant groups stated that good skills and knowledge were necessary to the job; however, only the European American participants mentioned any skill review and training after the guards were hired. In addition to trusting the training of the guards, the African American aquatic leaders had a, tendency to trust their staff more that the European American aquatic leaders. Both groups expressed frustration with the resources that were available to run the pool or the

program. They felt as though the financial restraints that were placed on them greatly increased the difficulty of the job.

Role models and community expectations were viewed as influential in promoting early participation in aquatics. In the situations in which the role models and community expectations did not support participation in aquatics, both groups stated that the lifeguards could be very influential with the patrons that came to the pool.

The stereotypes held by the general public on participation of African Americans in aquatics were viewed with some amusement, particularly by the African American aquatic leaders. Only one aquatic leader, an European American, talked about the ways that the stereotypes limited participation in aquatics.

Opportunities for participation were judged to be crucial. If someone did not have access to a body of water, then they would not be able to practice and develop the required skills to become a lifeguard. Economic factors also played a major role in participation. If the facility was available, but the money to attend the pool or the classes was not, then potential aquatic leaders would not get necessary training or practice. Many factors were identified as instrumental in the decision to become an aquatics leader. Understanding these factors and how they interact help us appreciate the reasons that persons enter or avoid the field of aquatics.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter integrates the findings of the research from this study with the literature. Since the study represents the sole investigation of the training and work experiences of aquatic leaders, a few of the factors are directly related to the literature; however, other factors can only be associated indirectly with topics in the literature.

The study investigated aquatic leadership as perceived and interpreted by European American and African American aquatic leaders. The study used naturalistic inquiry as a research method; three in-depth interviews were completed with four African American and four European American aquatic leaders. Personal histories were written for each participant; a cross-case analysis was then completed using the interview data and the framing questions. This chapter discusses the results of the interviews, personal histories and cross-case analyses with the relevant literature. The analysis of the participants' narratives identified three factors that influenced participation in aquatic leadership: (a) influence of others, particularly family; (b) availability of training; and (c) on-the-job experiences.

Three deterrents to participation in aquatics that were
identified in the participants' narratives in this study
were: (a) the effects of stereotypes on the microculture;
(b) the cost of training; and (c) the pay.

Influence of Others

The influence of others on participation in aquatic
activities was significant at two different times in the
participants' stories. The participants first reported the
influence of others in their learn-to-swim stories.
Participants next discussed the influence of others during
the description of their decision to take a lifeguard
training course. In the course of their stories, the
participants identified five "others" who directly or
indirectly influenced their decisions: members of their
family, members of their neighborhood peer group, local
lifeguards and pool managers, members of their community (or
micro-culture), and national role models.

Learning-to-swim. In the learning-to-swim stories the
major influences were the family and the community. In
seven of the stories (the four European American and three
of the African American, the exception was Raymond) the
mother was instrumental in making sure that the children
took swimming lessons. Once the children started lessons,
they continued to swim for about eight to ten years, either
in higher levels of lessons, on swim team, or in a backyard

pool. In addition to swimming, six of these participants
(David was the exception) were encouraged by their families
to be successful in school, participate in sports and other
activities such as church youth groups and Boy Scouts. This
high level of activity required a strong commitment from the
family and especially from the mother.

It was interesting to note that in her description of
the middle class townspeople, Heath (1983) documented a
similar commitment (to school, scheduled activities, and
even swimming) on the part of both African American and
European American parents. This similarity between the data
and the middle class description by Heath (1983) appeared to
reinforce the opinion put forth by Pendleton (1975) that
swimming was a middle class activity. For the European
American participants (Kevin, David, Stewart and Larry),
swimming was considered a normal activity; all of their
friends swam and all four of the participants participated
on swim teams. Although swimming and participation on the
swim team was considered a normal activity for David, he
makes it clear that after the first several swimming
lessons, which he, and not his parents, paid his swimming
fees. He also makes clear that his parents were not
interested in his success with school, with Boy Scouts or
with any other activity in which he participated. The
people who supported and influenced David came from outside
his family, his teachers and guidance counselors at school,

his scout masters, and the beach lifeguards and swimming instructors. However, the community and families of Kevin, Stewart, and Larry supported their swimming. David's support, after he learned to swim, came from the community and not his family. For the European American aquatic leaders, the family, neighborhood peer group and community played strong roles in their learn-to-swim story. Except for David, lifeguards and other aquatics leaders played a minor role; the role played by national role models was not mentioned. Certainly the participants were aware of the Olympic competitive swimmers and divers who as European Americans would have reinforced the notion that swimming was an accepted sport.

Pendleton (1975) also stated that aquatics was dominated by persons in the primary (European American) microculture. Again these data appeared to support Pendleton's claim through the fact that the four African American participants received most of their support for their participation in aquatics from their families or mentors and none from the African American community or microculture. Of the African American participants, Raymond was the only one whose family did not encourage or support his swimming. Raymond was similar to David in that his support came from a few teachers at school and the lifeguards at the pool; however, most of Raymond's friends did not swim and most of David's friends did. Raymond did

swim on school and recreational swim teams at the urging of the two influential teachers. The other African American participants (Earl, Jerome and Marcus) had strong family support for swimming and little or mixed support from friends.

Jerome lived in a rural area surrounded by his extended family; although his friends in school didn't swim, the rest of his family, cousins, aunts and uncles did swim and fish in the ponds and lakes on the family property. In fact, his mother started Jerome and his brother in swimming lessons so that they wouldn't drown when thrown into the ponds by his cousins. For Jerome, growing up, swimming appeared to be a natural activity and he would have participated on a swim team if one had been available. By the time Jerome began high school, he had begun to realize that sports other than swimming were more acceptable among his friends.

Earl, who grew up on military bases, also believed that swimming was a normal activity; all of his friends (who were mostly European American) swam. It wasn't until his father retired from the military and the family moved off the base into an African American neighborhood that he realized that "African Americans didn't swim."

Marcus realized relatively early that he was different from other African Americans, "I grew up white," so that swimming seemed like another activity that he did and his African American classmates did not. Even though he only

took lessons for two years, his parents built a swimming pool in the backyard which quickly became the center of activity for the family.

In the learn-to-swim stories for three of the African American participants, the family provided the greatest amount of support for swimming as an activity; for one participant, Raymond, the support was not provided by the family but by lifeguards and a couple of teachers in his high school. For the other participants, the lifeguards and other aquatic leaders provided minor support. Early in their swimming stories, the neighborhood peer group and community provided support for Earl and to some degree Jerome. When Jerome entered high school and Earl's family moved into an African American neighborhood the support from the neighborhood peer group and community vanished; and both participants stopped swimming. Raymond and Marcus continued to swim although they never experienced support for their swimming from either the neighborhood peer group or the community.

All four of the participants reinforced observations made by Campbell (1974) and Pendleton (1975) about national role models when they noted that the African American role models played basketball, football, and baseball, and did not participate in swimming. Neighborhood peer group, community and national role models appear to have some effect on learning to swim; however, the effect from the family appeared to be much stronger.

The swimming stories illustrate aspects of the literature that describes the conflicts between success and the expectations of a microculture. For the European American participants, swimming was an accepted activity and encouraged by the microculture. However, for the African American participants, swimming was not an activity that was encouraged by the African American microculture. Thus, to participate in swimming was to experience a double-consciousness between African American cultural expectations and European American cultural practices (Fordham, 1988; Stepto, 1991).

Earl basically stopped swimming when his family moved into an African American neighborhood. Even though his parents put a pool in their backyard, he rarely talks about swimming with his neighborhood friends, but he often talks about "hangin". He talks about the shades of grey, the double-consciousness, he had to learn between the European American microculture that he was used to and the African American microculture to which he was getting introduced. Earl probably experienced the most dramatic experience cross-cultural experience.

Jerome stopped swimming when he entered high school and started "hangin" with his friends in the city. Although he does not articulate the "shades of grey", he does indicate that he sensed a conflict between his mother's expectations and those of his friends. Although Raymond started swimming

in junior high school and continued through high school, he was supported by family and community for playing basketball and football, not swimming. In addition, Raymond also spent the most time of any of the participants "hangin" in the streets. Of all the participants, Raymond experienced the least amount of conflict between the microcultures; and he experienced that only at school. Marcus probably experienced the most conflict between the microcultures. He states that he hated himself, and that he didn't fit in anywhere, not in the European American microculture, and certainly not in the African American microculture where he was considered a "White wanna-be."

In high school, Earl, Jerome, and Raymond, to one degree or another, all chose the path of immersion (Stepto, 1991); they all entered the experience of the African American common culture of "hangin" with their group of friends, "crackin" on each other, talking to girls, and playing some basketball or football. Jerome and Raymond both talked about getting into trouble; even though Earl chose not get into trouble, he states that many of his friends did.

Marcus was definitely on the path of ascent (Stepto, 1991) and felt the conflict between the cultures very clearly. He had few close friends in high school and the African Americans thought that he was "across the tracks," that he felt that he was too good for them. His experience

parallels the description by Fordham (1988) of someone who develops a raceless persona, someone who either consciously or unconsciously "minimizes his/her relationship to the Black community" (p.57). During the interviews, Marcus could not relate his experience to the concepts of double-consciousness or racelessness, "It was just the way I grew up. That was what I saw."

The other participants did experience the phenomena of double-consciousness, although not quite as strongly as Marcus. Earl and Jerome experienced a type of conflict in consciousness between the expectations of their parents and their neighborhood peer group. Although Raymond experienced the conflict between the expectations of his neighborhood peer group and one influential teacher in his high school, he did not agree that becoming successful would require him to lose his African American identity.

> Now I would say that I sold out if once I became successful, didn't go back to where I came from and try to help kids to see a different way of life . . . If I made my money and just stayed away from it; the few that once they do get away, forget where they came from, and figure that they're too good to come back. (Raymond)

He stated that whenever he went home, that the community didn't understand why he wasn't playing basketball for a school and they didn't understand what he was studying in school, but they were proud of the fact that he was in school.

Decision to become a lifeguard. The participants were
influenced in their decision to take a lifeguard training
course either by their families or by local aquatic leaders.
Three of the four African American participants, Earl,
Jerome, and Marcus, were encouraged by their families to
take the course; Raymond was encouraged by a local pool
manager and swim coach. The primary reason for taking the
course was to get a job; both Raymond and Marcus worked as
lifeguards during high school and college even though it was
considered as unusual by other African Americans. Although
Earl and Jerome took the course early in their high school
years, they did not guard until after they retook the course
in college.

All of the participants reported that when they worked
in aquatics that they maintained separate sets of friends,
swimming friends, neighborhood friends and sports team
friends. Fordham (1988) states that "many of the successful
students find themselves juggling school and community
personae in order to minimize conflicts . . . " (p.80).
Even in college the African American participants felt as
though they had to keep their swimming persona separate from
their everyday identity. Marcus, the only African American
participant who had finished college at the time of the
interviews, was still working in aquatics and reported that
he continued to maintain different sets of friends.

Three of the European American participants (David, Stewart, and Larry), took the lifeguard training course in high school and then worked in aquatics during high school and college; Kevin chose to take the lifeguard training course in college. Stewart and Larry were encouraged to take the course by their parents; David and Kevin were encouraged to take the lifeguard training course through the influence of local aquatic leaders. Although all four continued to work in aquatics, David and Kevin were still in school at the time of the interviews; Stewart and Larry had graduated from college and had been working for several years. Stewart was the only participant who mentioned maintaining separate sets of friends. Although Stewart does not appear different from the primary European American microculture, he echoes the statement of Fordham (1988) when he says:

> A lot of things that are important to me don't really crop up. There's definitely nobody with either political leanings like mine or social outlooks like mine. It's strange being here far away from my friends outside of here, and then not have all those things I talk about after five o'clock or nine o'clock, whenever I get off, I don't talk about with the people here. (Stewart)

For Kevin, David and Larry, their work in aquatics was simply a part of them; they did not feel the separation that Stewart experienced.

The strongest influences on both groups of participants appeared to be the support of family or of influential

aquatic leaders. For the European American participants, the community and neighborhood peers reinforced their decision to swim or to work in aquatics. For the African American participants, their interest in aquatics created a sense of double-consciousness as they struggled with the opinion of the community and neighborhood peers that aquatics was an unusual activity for African Americans.

Opportunities for Training

The two major factors that influenced the opportunities for training were accessibility to facilities and cost. A third factor identified was the effect that actual instruction had on the desire to learn. Although it seems reasonable that a bad learning experience would inhibit the desire for further training, other factors appeared to have a stronger effect.

Facility and cost. Several researchers have cited facility availability as a reason for unequal training opportunities in various microcultures (Campbell, 1974; Jackson, 1991; Lawson, 1975; Pendleton, 1975). Facility availability was also a factor in the participants' swimming stories. Three of the European American participants (Kevin, Stewart and Larry) swam at the private club to which their parents belonged. David swam either on the beach or in a city pool. None of the African American participants belonged to a swimming club; but the parents of two of the

participants, Marcus and Earl, went to the expense of putting a swimming pool in the backyard, and Jerome swam in the ponds and lakes that were on his parents' property. Raymond swam either in the high school pool or the city pool that was about six blocks away from his home. For the African American participants in this study swimming facilities were not readily available. It was interesting to note that although the African American participants did not remark on their own experiences with respect to limited facility access, they did mention that access to aquatic facilities for several of the microcultures (in Greensboro) was limited. Both groups of participants defined limited access in terms of few convenient facilities, problems with transportation, and inability to pay required fees.

Opportunities for training are indeed limited if people cannot get to the facility or, once there, afford to pay for the lessons. If the students are not trained in the basic skills, it is little wonder that they are unprepared for lifeguard training. However, it would be simplistic to say that limited facility access and program cost are the only reasons that persons from the African American microculture do not take advantage of the training opportunities in aquatics.

Jackson (1991) mentions that participation in aquatics is often limited because of historical events and cultural misunderstandings. Larry, the oldest participant and a

European American, noted that when he was growing up all of the pools were segregated and that he didn't know where the African Americans swam or whether or not they even had a pool. Jackson (1991) notes that although the civil rights movement changed the laws on accessibility, many cities still do not have a public pool or other affordable swimming facility. Marcus, one of the African American participants, supports Jackson when he notes that about the 1980's more pools began to be built in the African American neighborhoods. Growing up, the other European American participants never questioned where anyone else swam; they simply assumed that everyone knew how to swim and that everyone had a place to swim.

The participants in this study noted two cultural misconceptions or stereotypes that could affect not only participation in aquatics but also could provide justification for not building more facilities. The one cultural myth that none of the participants mentioned was the folk myth of the middle passage (the reason that African Americans do not swim was due to the transportation to this country in slave ships).

The stereotype that the European American participants identified (and all but one discounted) was that African Americans were uninterested in swimming. The stereotype could then be a handy explanation for the lack of African Americans who swim or who are in aquatic leadership

positions. This supposition could also be used to justify the lack of aquatic facilities in certain microcultural neighborhoods. This stereotype also becomes a convenient explanation for the decreased participation in the pools that are in African American neighborhoods. However, Larry (one of the European American participants) pointed out that the African American participation in his pool was much higher than would be expected from the neighborhood. Although the stereotype could provide explanations for observed events, it could do so only if the enjoyment of the children when they enter the pool is ignored.

The second stereotype, that African Americans could not swim, was identified by the African American participants in the study and supported as a cultural misconception in the literature (Jackson, 1991; Pendleton, 1975). Jerome, Earl, Raymond, and Marcus all noted that both European Americans and African Americans assumed that African Americans could not swim. Jerome pointed out that because of this stereotype, many African Americans did not even try. Again this supposition could be used to justify the lack of aquatic facilities in certain microcultural neighborhoods (better to build basketball courts) or to explain the decreased participation in the pools that are in African American neighborhoods (why go if you can't swim). In this case, although the stereotype could provide explanations for observed events, it actually becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Effect of instruction. The effects of instruction on participation in aquatics were significant at two main times in the participants' stories. In their learn-to-swim stories, Larry, Jerome, Stewart, Marcus and Earl were helped by the fact that the microculture of their home was close to the middle class learning environment that the swimming curriculum generally employed. Research indicates that when the learning environment approximates the home environment that student performance improves (Sinclair & Ghory, 1987; Applebee, 1991; Eisenhart & Cutts-Dougherty, 1991). All five participants were used to structured time, an emphasis on success and doing their best, and supportive parents.

Raymond represents the situation in which a mismatch between the student and the instructional system creates feelings of inadequacy in the student and a disdain for learning (Sinclair & Ghory, 1987). Raymond, who was living among the inner city projects, maintained a different outlook from many of his teachers about what was important in life. Although Raymond did not do well in school, he excelled in sports which were activities that were both respected at home and rewarded at school (Heath, 1983).

Kevin and David do not reflect the literature as clearly as the other participants. Kevin detested school and any other person or activity that reminded him of school: "It felt like a prison . . . I felt like all of the creativity that I had when I was young was crushed for about

twelve years." Even though his family could be identified with the middle class microculture, his responses to the instructional system paralleled the responses noted in the literature (Wilson & Justiz, 1988; Beckman, 1988) for minorities who have experienced the annihilation of the personality in order to accommodate the macroculture. Even though Kevin could not stand the organized structure or culture of school, he enjoyed the structure and discipline of the sports environment, swim team, and then later basketball and football.

David loved school. It gave him a chance to succeed and to be recognized, a chance to get away from a family that provided little encouragement and no acknowledgement for his achievements. In other words, behaviors rewarded at school were ridiculed and denied at home; David rejected his home environment and chose the school environment as his personal microculture. He continued to develop interest in aquatics because he received ribbons when he swam on swim team (recognition) and because of his awe of the lifeguards on the beach.

By the time the participants entered their Lifeguard Training courses they seemed to accept the system. All of the participants had been encouraged to obtain the training so that they could work as lifeguards. Therefore, they had an immediate goal in mind; the knowledge had meaning because it would be useful in the future (Stipek, 1993). Generally,

the participants were impressed with their instructors' knowledge, patience and caring. The two participants who did not report a good first learning experience stayed with the course for the certification so that they could get the job. Although caring instructors were important at the lifeguard training level, the probability that certification would result in a job seemed to reinforce participation. A negative early experience appeared to have a minimal effect on the participant's decision to take the leadership courses. The greatest influence was the support and encouragement that the participants received from others.

On-the-Job Experiences

For all of the participants most of the on-the-job experiences tended to reinforce their decision to become aquatic leaders. The two most influential experiences were the sense that they were making a difference in the lives of the children and the fun they had working with the children. These two aspects of the job made up for all of the frustrations and annoyances. The European American participants in the study stated that the difference that they made in the lives of many patrons made the work worthwhile.

However, the African American participants were much more emphatic when they made the same statement. The African American participants definitely saw themselves on the path

of ascent (Stepto, 1991). Although several of them stated that they did not feel successful yet, they knew that they were going to be successful. They saw themselves as role models for the children who came to the pool; they saw themselves showing the children another way to live their lives. They tried to encourage the children who came to the pool to try new activities and to look at situations a different way. All of the African American participants appeared to have come to terms with the experiences in double-consciousness that they had expressed earlier. They felt good about themselves and about the decisions that they were making about their future.

A primary reason cited for leaving aquatics was insufficient pay. The participants noted that, for the required training, the responsibility and the liability, the pay was ludicrous. Inadequate pay scales not only caused good aquatic leaders to leave the field but also made it difficult to attract new people into the training.

The study identified an apparent difference between the two groups of participants on the issue of staff trust. The African American aquatic leaders tended to trust their staff more, allow more ownership of the job and require less in-service training. The European Americans tended to supervise their staff more closely, maintain more control over job assignments and completion and require more in-service training.

I can only speculate on the reasons for this finding.
Fordham (1988) indicates that African Americans who have
experienced success when it is defined in European American
microcultural terms find themselves caught between the group
identity of the African American cultural system and the
"individualistic impersonal cultural system of the dominant
society" (p.77). It appeared that the African American
aquatic leaders in this study attempted to develop a
management style that allowed them to span both cultures.
Since the European American microculture tended to emphasize
individual achievement, it seems reasonable to expect the
European American leaders to assume full responsibility of
their staff. However, the African American aquatic leaders,
by giving their staff more ownership of the work, perhaps
attempted to establish a group culture that paralleled an
important aspect of their microculture. "Black children . .
are raised in the collective view of success, an ethos that
is concerned with the Black community as a whole" (Fordham,
1988). In allowing the staff ownership of the job, not only
have the African American aquatic leaders created a sense of
community in the staff but they also established an
atmosphere in which the staff could continue their own
development through problem solving and assumption of added
responsibilities.

Another possible explanation utilizes the concept of
double-consciousness. Although the African American

participants did not articulate the double-consciousness noted by Fordham (1988) and Stepto (1991), they could have been responding to its presence. By allowing the staff more ownership of the job the aquatic leaders stepped outside the center of staff focus and therefore decreased the sense of alienation that would result if they assumed complete authority. By increasing the role of the staff, they decreased the possibility of being accused of "acting White" and also decreased potential conflicts with the staff. European American aquatic leaders have nothing to lose if they are ever accused of "acting White"; however, if European American aquatic leaders would increase the responsibilities for their staff, then the possibility that something would go wrong would increase, which would threaten the European American manager's individual sense of success or accomplishment.

Summary

Although the aquatic leaders that were interviewed identified several frustrations and problems with the area of aquatics, they also believed that aquatics presented a viable area of employment and was becoming more accessible for persons from different microcultures. However, the solution to lack of participation in aquatics by various microcultures is not as simple as building more facilities or decreasing the cost of lessons. Certainly lack of

facilities and various economic factors play a major role; however, other factors must also be addressed.

It appears that Pendleton (1975) was right, that participation in aquatics is by the middle class. History and various stereotypes continue to promote aquatics as a middle class sport. The effects of stereotypes on the participation of African Americans in aquatics were noted by both groups of participants. Although the participants did not make the connection, it seems reasonable to question the interaction of societal stereotypes on community expectations. Both groups of participants indirectly identified a stereotype for the European American community when they stated that (all) European Americans could swim. This stereotype works to reinforce the expectations of the European American community. Both groups of participants also identified stereotypes for the African American community (not interested; can't swim) which appeared to reinforce the expectations of the African American community. The existence of these stereotypes appears to have a direct influence on the availability and use of aquatic facilities and programs. As aquatic professionals, we need to continue to investigate the ways that stereotypes affect instructional techniques, expectations for our students, and the atmosphere that we create in the aquatic facility.

The existence of these stereotypes could also be a reflection of the historical events of the segregation of aquatic facilities and of the Civil Rights Movement. Perhaps the fact that aquatic facilities were closed to, or did not exist for, many in the African American microcultures created the belief that African Americans could not swim as a type of cultural defense mechanism. The European American stereotype, that African Americans were uninterested in swimming, perhaps developed because African Americans were never seen swimming. Another possibility for the development of the uninterested stereotype could be a type of justification for not providing access to facilities. It appears that historical events establish various trends or habits that can lead to cultural misconceptions. Again, as aquatic professionals, we need to investigate the effects that historical events have had on the participation of various microcultures in aquatics.

Conclusions and Suggestions to the Aquatics Profession

Based on the limitations of this study the following conclusions and suggestions to the aquatic profession were made:

1. For the African American and European American leaders in this study, the support of family was an important factor in the participation in aquatics.

As aquatic professionals, we need to educate the family and the community of the microcultures that we wish

to reach about the benefits of aquatics. We need to communicate these benefits to the parents so that they will encourage and support their children to try new activities. We need to develop ways to decrease the cost or subsidize the cost of training for those who cannot afford it. It may be necessary to subsidize not only the cost of training but also the cost of transportation, bathing suits and towels, and even meals.

2. In this study, the European American aquatic leaders perceived aquatic leadership as a natural choice in their microculture for employment; the African American aquatic leaders perceived aquatics leadership to be an alien choice in their microculture for employment.

As aquatic professionals we need to reeducate ourselves and persons in both microcultures to the realization that African Americans can swim and that swimming is an acceptable sport for African Americans as well as European Americans. We also need to inform persons outside the area of aquatics about the real nature of work in aquatics, to emphasize the nurturing aspects and de-emphasize the glamour.

3. In this study, the European American aquatic leaders had greater access to facilities and programs (lessons and/or swim team) than the African American aquatic leaders.

Although more facilities eventually need to be built in areas that are convenient to the various microcultures, as aquatics professionals we can work to make the current facilities friendlier and more inviting. Raymond, one of the African American aquatic leaders, talked about creating a social atmosphere in the facility rather than an atmosphere based on sport, fitness, or competition. In addition, we can also use teaching/training philosophies and techniques that would invite student curiosity and team learning instead of insisting on individual attainment of specific skills within a set time frame.

Recommendations for Future Research

Several questions and ideas for further study were raised by this research. Recommendations for future research include:

1.   Continue the investigation of perceptions with African American and European American aquatic leaders in other communities.

2.   Investigate perceptions of African American and European American non-aquatic leaders, both swimmers and non-swimmers, about participation in aquatics.

3.   Investigate the perceptions of females about aquatics and aquatic leadership in order to understand participation and employment patterns.

4.   Investigate the perceptions of other microcultural groups about aquatics and aquatic leadership in order to better understand participation patterns.

5.   Further investigate the economic factors that affect participation of various microcultures in aquatics.

6.   Further investigate the effects that stereotypes have on participation in aquatics or aquatic leadership.

7.   Investigate the effect that the folk myth of the middle passage has on participation in aquatics.

8.   Investigate the effects of segregation and the Civil Rights Movement on participation in aquatics.

9.   Investigate the apparent differences in staff trust and need for in-service training between African American and European American aquatic leaders.

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APPENDIX A

Table A1: Cultural Diversity in Aquatic Leadership

CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN AQUATIC LEADERSHIP				
COMMUNITY	Greensboro		Winston-Salem	
% CULTURALLY DIVERSE POPULATION	~ 30 %		~ 23 %	
CATEGORIES OF AQUATIC LEADERS	Life-guard	Water Safety Ins.	Life-guard	Water Safety Ins.
# OF AQUATIC LEADERS	250	120	NA	174

% OF AQUATIC LEADERS FOR INDIVIDUAL CULTURAL GROUPS				
COMMUNITY	Greensboro		Winston-Salem	
CATEGORIES OF AQUATIC LEADERS	Life-guard	Water Safety Ins.	Life-guard	Water Safety Ins.
EUROPEAN AMERICAN	91 %	94 %	NA	93 %
AFRICAN AMERICAN	9 %	5 %	NA	6 %
ASIAN AMERICAN	0 %	1 %	NA	1 %
NATIVE AMERICAN	0 %	0 %	NA	0 %
HISPANIC	0 %	0 %	NA	0 %

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent: Short Form and Oral Presentation

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO

Consent to Act as a Human Subject
(Short Form)

Subject's Name _____

Date of Consent _____

I hereby consent to participate in the research project entitled __Aquatic Leadership__
__as Perceived by African-American and Anglo-American Aquatic Leaders.__

An explanation of the procedures and/or investigations to be followed and their purpose,

including any experimental procedures, was provided to me by __Ann Wieser__

_____. I was also informed about any benefits, risks, or discomforts that I
might expect. I was given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the research and was
assured that I am free to withdraw my consent to participate in the project at any time without
penalty or prejudice. I understand that I will not be identified by name as a participant in this
project.

I have been assured that the explanation I have received regarding this project and this
consent form have been approved by the University Institutional Review Board which ensures
that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. If I have any
questions about this, I have been told to call the Office of Research Services at (919)334-5878.

I understand that any new information that develops during the project will be provided
to me if that information might affect my willingness to continue participation in the project. In
addition, I have been informed of the compensation/treatment or the absence of
compensation/treatment should I be injured in this project.

_____   _____
Subject's Signature   Witness to Oral Presentation
                                                              and Signature of Subject

If subject is a minor or for some other reason unable to sign, complete the following:

Subject is ____ years old or unable to sign because _____

_____

_____
Parent(s)/Guardian Signature

SHORT.FRM

1

Informed Consent Oral Presentation

I want to thank you for agreeing to assist me with my research. I would like to tell you about the project so that you understand the scope and procedures of the project. The project is going to be looking at aquatic leadership from the perspective of African American and Euro-American aquatic leaders. With this information I expect to arrive at a better understanding of the decisions and career path of persons who become aquatic leaders. In addition, the information can be used to provide better recruitment of African Americans into aquatics, to provide more effective training, and to provide improved on the job support. There are no risks involved. Anything that you say here remains here. You are in control of what you want to say; if you do not wish to talk about something, then say, "I don't want to talk about that"; and I will respect your wishes. You may withdraw from the project at any time. Your time commitment to the project will be between 4 - 6 hours for your participation in three to four interviews. After the interviews, you will be asked to review a summary or report of your interviews. At that time please make any corrections or additions that you feel are necessary. Your participation will remain confidential. Your interviews will be identified by a code in the data; your name will be changed in the final write up. After the final writeup, all transcripts and audiotapes will be destroyed.

Even though I may know much about aquatics, I don't know who you think about aquatics - or how you learned about aquatics - or how you look at aquatics. On that, you are the expert. Since everybody looks at things differently, I want to understand how you perceive things.

Do you have any questions? If you have questions during the project, please let me know and I will answer them to the best of my ability.

APPENDIX C

Table C2: Participant Data

	African American	European American
Age:		
under 25	3	3
over 25	1	1
Employer:		
city	3	3
public service agency	1	1
Position:		
lifeguard	1	0
asst. mgr.	0	2
manager	3	2
Experience:		
5 years or less	3	2
10 years or more	1	2
Education:		
graduated college	1	2
Sr. in college	2	1
Jr. in college	1	1

APPENDIX D

Table D3: Current Aquatic Certifications Held by

Participating Aquatic Leaders

Aquatic Leader	Agency	Current Aquatic Certifications
David	ARC	CPR, LGT, WSI, LGTI
Earl	ARC	CPR, LGT, WSI
Jerome	ARC	CPR, LGT
Kevin	ARC	CPR, LGT, WSI
Larry	ARC	CPR, LGT, WSI, LGTI
Marcus	ARC	CPR, LGT, WSI, LGTI, CPRI, WSIT, LGTIT, CPRIT
	YMCA	PROGRESSIVE SWIM INSTRUCTOR
		POOL OPERATOR
		WATER FRONT DIRECTOR
Raymond	ARC	CPR, LGT, WSI,
Stewart	ARC	CPR, LGT, WSI, STSC,
	NSPF	CERTIFIED POOL OPERATOR
	USWFA	WATER EXERCISE
	AF	WATER EXERCISE

APPENDIX E

Researcher's Current Aquatic Certifications

Current Certifications	Date received:
American Red Cross	
Water Safety Instructor Trainer	1986
Water Safety Instructor	1963
(Adapted Aquatics Instructor Trainer,1990)	
(Adapted Aquatics Instructor,1981)	
Lifeguard Training Instructor Trainer	1989, r.95
Lifeguard Training and Instructor	1989, r.95
(Advanced Lifesaving since 1963)	
CPR for Professional Rescuer Instructor Trainer	1995
CPR for Professional Rescuer Instructor	1995
CPR for Professional Rescuer	1995
Standard First Aid Instructor Trainer	1989
(Multimedia Instructor & Instructor Trainer since 1980)	
CPR & BLS Instructor and Trainer	1989
(CPR Instructor since 1980)	
Instructor Candidate Instructor Trainer	1990

American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance; Aquatics Council	
Master Clinician of:	
Aquatics Facilities Management	1993
Adapted Aquatics	1993
Adapted Aquatics Instructor	1993
Adapted Aquatics National Faculty	1993

National Swimming Pool Foundation	
Instructor Trainer, National Faculty	1990
CPO Instructor	1989
Certified Pool Operator	1988

Professional Association of Diving Instructors	
Open Water SCUBA Instructor	1980

APPENDIX F

Interview Guide for First Interview

Describe your self to me.

How old are you?

Tell me about yourself growing up.

What was the most exciting thing you experienced growing up.

Describe the house you lived in as a teenager.

Who has had the greatest influence on you as a person.

Growing up, what are three of the most important decisions
that were made that helped shape the person you are
now?

What makes you feel successful?

What makes you feel discouraged?

Describe the ideal job/work that you would like to do.

Tell me about your parents. What do they do?

Do you have brothers or sisters?

Tell me about your grandparents.

Tell me about school. What did you like best about
school. (favorite classes or teachers)

How did school influence you when you were growing up?

What were the classes like that you learned best in.

When / How did you start swimming?

What do you remember about learning to swim?

Who else in your family swims?

What family stories do you remember about swimming or being in or around the water?

When you were growing up, what/how did you think about swimming?

When you were growing up, what/how did your friends think about swimming?

Tell me about the different things/classes/activities that you have done in swimming or aquatics? (SCUBA, boating, competitive, etc)

Why did you take Lifesaving/Lifeguard Training?

Where did you take your LGT?

Describe your instructor.

What if anything impressed you about your instructor?

How were you the same as the other students in the class?

How were you different?

Were there other students in the class who did not do as well as you?

What problems did they have?

Where do you think those problems came from?

Tell me about any other aquatics leadership courses that you have taken.

Describe your instructor.

What if anything impressed you about your instructor.

Were there other people in the class who did not do as well as you?

Talk about what you observed and why you think those persons had problems.

In aquatics, who has had the greatest influence on your development?

How has that person influenced you?

Describe your job as _____.

What do you like about your job?

What do you dislike about the job?

What 3 things would you change about work in aquatics?

When you meet a new person in your community and you tell them that you are a _____; what is their reaction/ describe their reaction.

In your opinion, why are there apparently few African Americans who become full time aquatic leaders?

If your brother/sister tells you that he/she wants to become an aquatic director of a college or university, what would you tell him/her?

APPENDIX G

Interview Guide for the Second Interview

Growing up, how did your family support your interest in
     swimming?

Your LGT course was in _____?

What was the ethnic background of the students?

How many of those students became lifeguards?

Do you know of anyone else who took the course with you who
     are lifeguards today?

How long have you worked in aquatics?

For me, there was a time when swimming was getting wet,
     having fun and splashing around. Then there was a time
     when, even though the fun element was still there,
     swimming became something else, perhaps more serious;
     a time when swimming took on another dimension, another
     meaning. Did that happen to you?

I'd like you to talk about what happened to cause that
     change.

What was swimming like before the change? What did you do
     when you went to the pool?

What meaning did swimming have after the change?

Sometimes when we experience change it's with our friends;
     sometimes it's not. Did anyone else experience that
     change with you?

What kind of reaction or support did you get from your

friends during and after the change?

What effect did your increased interest and proficiency in

swimming have on your relationships with your friends?

I'd like you to think about the place where you generally

went swimming. I'd like you to think back and describe

how you saw the job of the lifeguard. What did the

lifeguards do? How did they act?

Did you like or respect the lifeguards?

I can remember when I started swimming. My early swim

experiences were formed by a combination of being

taught in the ocean by my father, trying to learn on my

own (through reading a book and experimentation) and

through an organization, in my case, the Girl Scouts.

Do you associate any organization with your early swim

experiences? For example you mentioned the

_____.

What swim experiences do you associate with that

organization?

How did the experiences of that organization help shape you

as a person?

I want you to think back "10" years ago. It's a sunny summer

day about 9 or 10 o'clock in the morning.

How old are you?

What are you and your friends going to do today?

Describe your day.

You say to your friends: "Hey, let's go over to the pool."
What happens next?

You tell your friends: "In 10 years I'm going to be a
lifeguard (and manage a swimming pool)." Describe
their reaction.

What do they say they will be doing?

What would it take to get the teens from (housing project)
interested in swimming and water safety?

APPENDIX H

Interview Guide for Third Interview

Why did you choose aquatics as a sport or as something to
    participate in?

When did you make that choice?

Describe how it feels when you swim?

For the record, were you ever on a swim team? For how long?

What was involved in your decision to participate or not
    participate? What was involved in your decision to
    quit?

What other sports/teams did you participate on? For how
    long?

What was involved in your decision to participate?

Describe your perception of competition, of being
    competitive?

What importance did competition have for you when you were
    growing up?

    And now?

Were your parents divorced? When?

What effect did the divorce have on you personally?

What importance did academics in general have for you when
    you were growing up?

What importance do academics have for you now?

For you, what is the importance of:

    history

    English

    math

    water safety

Growing up, what was your involvement in the church? How

    did the church influence you?

What is the effect of national (sports figures) on the kids

    in the (African or European American) community?

        national church leaders

        local school teachers

        local lifeguards and swim instructors

Is the effect different for children today than for you as a

    child?

Who had the greatest influence on your development as a

    person?

How does goal setting, or the ability to set goals affect

    participation in aquatics?

I'd like you to discuss how you see the relationship between

    economics (or money/class/family income level) and

    participation in aquatics.

I'd like you to think about the children who come from the

    projects or from lower income families.

When they come to the pool, why do they come to the pool?

    What do they do?

    How do they act?

When they stay away from the pool, why do they stay away?

What do they do instead?

I'd like you to think about the children who come from

---------, an upper level income family.

Why do they go to a pool?

What do they do?

How do they act?

Why do they stay away from the pool when they do?

What do they do instead?

If you were going to interact with the children, for

example teaching one swim class for children from the

housing projects and another swim class for children

from an area of expensive homes, would there be any

differences in the way you would approach the teaching

of the two classes?

What changes would you make?

Describe what it would be like to grow up in an African

American community or neighborhood.

Describe what it would be like to grow up in a European

American community or neighborhood.

How do the children talk?

What sports are played?

What are the feelings about school?

How are families organized?

(What prejudice exists?)

(What facilities/opportunities are available?)

(What is the reaction of lower income African Americans
toward a successful African American?)

What response would other African American's have toward an
African American who grew up in a European American
neighborhood?

What response would other European American's have toward a
European American who grew up in an African American
neighborhood?