

## **Linetta Gilbert**

Everything that I embodied about community engagement, about what we now call social justice and equity, those are things that I grew up understanding were to be the right way to live in America, okay. And, I've always been a person – I call myself a democracy girl, I really believe in democracy. It's messy, it's difficult, but that's the type of governance – governing system that I believe in. And so, at a community foundation, you get a chance to practice democracy, to heighten the impact of democracy, to inform people who are going to make decisions about what can happen, and to bring a broader group of people together to figure it all out. Being in the philanthropic space in New Orleans said to me, I got to meet all of those very high-base donors who could make all the difference in how New Orleans operated. I got to meet people who were giving every day to their community to keep things going, you know, through their churches just directly to help small nonprofits, you know, be thorns in the side of larger institutions just to get those institutions to move and include people. I mean, so I got to see all of that, and I just felt like that's how you get to the whole matter of – of doing social justice, not just talking about it, but making sure that it happens. Social justice was not a thing for me. It was not a bunch of papers to be written. It was not, you know, marches and stuff. It was – can we recreate or dismantle systems that are keeping people from accomplishing all they can become? You know, I didn't know what philanthropy really was as an institution when I joined the Greater New Orleans Foundation. And, the things that I've felt should influence decisions centered around bringing a variety of people together to discern what the issues were and come up with a decision. So, they call that convening in some cases, you know, convening spaces can be used for a lot of purposes, but my purpose was to be able to inform the decision-making of the foundation leaders when they're putting out resources or requesting assets for the foundation on behalf of the community. So, as I worked with different nonprofits in New Orleans, I saw that – that community philanthropy could be anyone giving something of value, you know, to the community foundation to hold in perpetuity, you know, and that the donor could advise how those things would be used. So, so that was another way that Carol, you know, and Doug were able to affect the thought processes, influence some of the thinking of the Greater New Orleans Foundation.