Junior Dufort: An Interview by Alyssa Gabbidon

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Conducted on Zoom

Junior Dufort (he/him) is a Black youth activist from Connecticut. Dufort was featured on Good Morning America in 2020 after leading a protest in his hometown and marching to the police station. After pursuing his bachelor's degree in criminal justice and political science, Dufort decided to attend law school and is a current law student at the University of Maryland.

ALYSSA GABBIDON: Hi, everyone, I'm here with youth activist, Junior Dufort. How are you doing today, Junior?

JUNIOR DUFORT: I'm well, how are you?

GABBIDON: I am great. So as you know, this interview is part of a larger class. And we've been gathering information on youth activists since 2010. We find that a lot of information is missing so we'd like to add to the archive as much as possible. This information will be used for educational purposes in case someone wants to research youth activists or something along those lines. Your voice matters to us, it's important, and we really want to hear. So let's dive in. How would you describe your childhood?

DUFORT: My childhood, I grew up in an impoverished city. My elementary school shut down right after my graduation. I went to a middle school with not many resources. And as a result, a large portion of the population suffered. We held the lowest testing scores in the state. Again, we didn't have many resources. It wasn't until I went to high school, where I went to a private school, where I was able to get resources, take advanced classes, and really take challenging courses that were able to lead me out of the city. But growing up, a lot of these resources were not provided to us.

GABBIDON: How would you say the lack of resources affected your drive to learn and how you viewed education?

DUFORT: Right. So growing up, of course, education wasn't important to me. One because I'm a child, but also because there's not really people pushing you and guiding you towards the right route. They're not explaining to you why education is important. And also as a child, if you're not seeing money being put into something, then how important can it really be? So I found that myself and a lot of my peers, we didn't take school seriously. We got into other things, but that's as a result of how much importance the local government has put into education itself.

GABBIDON: How did family members push you to stay on track with your education if any did?

DUFORT: My parents are foreign, they come from Haiti. And so they were the only thing tying me to education. I knew that if I didn't come home with the correct grades there would be disciplinary actions. So that was really the only thing driving me. However, because there was a language barrier, my parents couldn't necessarily help me in school. They could only tell me that it's important and urged me to figure it out on my own, but I didn't have the academic support that they would have liked to give me because of that language barrier. So a lot of it was me doing it on my own.

GABBIDON: Did you find that having parents who were immigrants affected any different parts of your life other than education?

DUFORT: I mean, the lifestyle is a bit different. There's a cultural difference, of course. But other than that, where I grew up, it was pretty much we're all pretty much the same. We all came from different diverse places. A lot of Hispanics where I grew up. A lot of Jamaicans. People from all over the place.

GABBIDON: How would you say your neighborhood growing up, reflected that diversity? And how did that impact you as a child?

DUFORT: Well, growing up, there was a lot of violence between different ethnic groups. I know when I was in elementary school, a lot of it was like Haitians versus Cape Verdeans. And Puerto Ricans versus other ethnic groups. And that affected me because they would do stuff like that at the park. So as a result, my parents were like, “Okay, you're not allowed to go to the park. You can only play in our yard.” And as a kid, you don't really understand that. You’re like, “I just want to go to the park. I just want to play basketball. Why are you being mean?” But I found that my parents weren't the only ones putting those restrictions on me. A lot of other kids couldn't go to that park for that same reason. So I guess it took away from being a child a little bit because we weren't able to do the norm. We weren’t able to do things that kids wanted to do.

GABBIDON: Are there any parts of your childhood that you would say had the biggest influence on your adulthood or your activism?

DUFORT: Yes, I think one of the biggest things is that the city where I grew up failed to implement measures for the youth. I think the year my elementary school shut down, two other elementary schools shut down as well. So it was three in total in that one city. The YMCA lost funding.[1] Rec leagues, there weren't many. So as a result, there wasn't much for the youth to do. There weren't any programs set up for us. It felt like we were at the bottom of the list. There were other pressing issues, but the youth “that can hold off.” I think that had detrimental effects on the youth, the city. I think we're still seeing effects from all of that now. And so that was one thing that has always angered me growing up and has led me to activism.

GABBIDON: What was it like adjusting to going from a school with no resources to a private school?

[1] The YMCA addresses issues affecting each community by developing programs and activities with special focus on young people.

DUFORT: It was terrible. Honestly. Well, I wouldn't say it was terrible but it was different. For one, the school was a private school for people outside of my city. But for people who lived in the city, it was considered a public school. So with that being said, the school was pretty much split 50/50. 50 minorities and 50 white. When I went in, I went into advanced classes, honor classes, AP. So I was in a completely different world than a lot of my friends growing up. So I was in classes with all white people. And that was very challenging for me. For the first time, I was the only Black person in a white space. I felt like I didn't belong. I had imposter syndrome.[2] One time, I'll never forget, my teacher was reading “A Talk to Teachers” by James Baldwin.[3] And my teacher looks at me and he says “Junior you know, you being African American, why don't you tell us what this means to you?” And I remember all the heads turning and looking at me, and I felt so uncomfortable. Ironically, I was saved by the bell. The bell rang, and we were let go so I didn't have to answer that question. But I remember I considered dropping because I felt like I didn't belong. But outside of that, I also felt guilty because I really did benefit from those AP classes. I benefited from taking that route, but other people who were going to the same school as me, who were taking ordinary classes, their education wasn't necessarily taken seriously. And it shows, so I guess I had survival syndrome, when you feel bad for making it out, and others don't. It’s rough.

GABBIDON: How did the people in your community react to this emergence of private school and kids from the community going to it?

DUFORT: I don't really think they had much thoughts.There weren’t really many thoughts on it. The only time that the community really engaged with our school was during sports. So we had a fantastic athletic program. So the community really backed our athletics department. But in regards to education, if you were to look at the percentages, or the demographics of who was taking AP classes – it was majority white of course. A few Asians. And I could probably count on both hands how many Black students were taking AP classes and I went to a large school. My graduating class was around 600. If you look at the demographics of the school, it's pretty much a 50/50 split. So if I can count how many students are taking AP classes, honor classes, I think that's a problem but it hasn't been addressed to my knowledge.

GABBIDON: How do you think teachers with minority students can shape their teaching to cater to the needs of the minorities in their classrooms?

DUFORT: I think it's important to address African American history. For instance, in that English class, I think it's great that we were reading “A Talk to Teachers” by James Baldwin. That's actually one of my favorite pieces by him. However, I think it's highly inappropriate to call on a Black student to be the spokesperson for Black students. So I think teachers need to find a way

[2] Imposter syndrome is the persistent inability to believe that one's success is deserved or has been legitimately achieved as a result of one's own efforts or skills.

[3] James Baldwin delivered a speech, “A Talk to Teachers”, where he proclaimed the responsibility educators have to addressing racism in America and empowering Black students to continue their fight for justice.

to teach these subjects, but also make a comfortable environment for everyone in the classroom. I don't think a student should ever have to feel like they are the spokesperson for other Black students.

GABBIDON: Is there anyone you learned about in school, a historical figure, that pushed you towards activism, or influenced you in any way?

DUFORT: My sophomore year, we did a project on an American writer. I chose Langston Hughes.[4] And so I did a lot of research on him. I did a lot of research on the Harlem Renaissance. I thought his work was beautiful. I fell in love with his work. So I think Langston Hughes really started it for me. But again, that was something that I had to go out and do on my own. It wasn't at the hands or the help of my teachers. They didn't say “Choose a Black person.” Or “Choose someone who's African American.” That was something I picked up on my own.

GABBIDON: What do you think stood out to you about Langston Hughes that drew you towards him?

DUFORT: Langston Hughes was able to, if you're not familiar with him, he started uprising around the 1920s/1930s. Obviously, that was a difficult time for African Americans. He really brought out Black art. It was the idea of Black excellence, before Black excellence. So he really got people excited about the talents that African Americans, or I should say Black people, had in America. So with the help of him, he brought out jazz, poetry, Black art. It was a time period where people were actually like, “Yeah, Black people *are* very talented.” And “This is cool.” And for the first time, people were actually proud to be Black, and they were proud of their work. And so I thought that was beautiful. And the work that he put into the Harlem Renaissance, I think is historic. Legendary, for lack of better words.

GABBIDON: So you mentioned the term Black excellence, what does this mean to you? And what forms does this take?

DUFORT: That's a tough question. I don't know if there's a definition of Black excellence. I think a lot of people think Black excellence is going to college, getting a degree, and working for corporate America. I don't think that's the definition of Black excellence. I think Black excellence can be anything, as long as you're doing what's passionate for you. As long as you're making a change. So with that being said owning your own business without going to school, that could be Black excellence. Excelling in sports. Going to college and getting a job. I think Black excellence is everything that creates a path for other African Americans or other Black people to pursue their dreams.

GABBIDON: Have you ever felt like there was a lot of pressure on you to succeed in a certain way, either by your family, friends, or society. Or to take a certain path?

DUFORT: Absolutely. From my family, of course. Being foreign, they came here. My parents

[4] Langston Hughes was a Black poet and activist that was popular during the Harlem Renaissance.

made it clear, they came here for me and my siblings. They didn't leave their home country for no reason. They left so that we can have a better life. So that we can make it out. And so failing is not an option. So there's that pressure from the family. From my community as I stated, there weren't many Black people in AP classes or in honor classes. So I was looked upon as the "token." Everyone's looking at me, both Black and white like "He's going to make it out. He's going to be the one to come back and make the change." So there's a sense of pressure, feeling like you're in the spotlight and feeling like you do have to do well because you're being watched. Growing up, I was in the newspaper a lot for a lot of different things. I had one big scholarship in high school. I was president of my NAACP chapter. So it did feel like there was always a sense of pressure on me from the community, from my family, to excel and do well.

GABBIDON: How would you say being labeled as the "token Black kid" impacted how you perceived yourself?

DUFORT: Going back to what I stated earlier, I felt guilty because "Why am I the only one that people are paying attention to? Why am I the only one that people want to succeed? What's so special about me? Why am I the chosen Black?" So I felt guilty. Going into college, I started reflecting upon high school. My high school had three guidance counselors for the grade. So that meant each guidance counselor was assigned 200 plus students, and you can't effectively serve 200 students at once. And that was the case for sure. Not all the students' needs were met. And so I found that guidance counselors were putting a lot of work into students who they believed would make it. So for me, applying to college was probably the easiest process I have gone through. I got a lot of help from my guidance counselor, very grateful. But looking back on it, I'm like, "Well, maybe other people who had gotten the same amount of work, maybe they would have been able to have opportunities as well." But they weren't because maybe the guidance counselor didn't believe in them. And I think that's really unfair. It's something that makes me feel really guilty. Although I don't really have a say, it's not something that I could have done differently. But it makes me feel bad because I feel like everyone should be given a fair shot, not just those who you think will succeed.

GABBIDON: So being exposed to this new white environment, were there any encounters with racism that you experience?

DUFORT: Yes. There were of course the low-key comments that maybe it means something, maybe it doesn't. I guess I should start off with this. This is pretty important. My school was pretty segregated. We had two cafeterias. Of course, it was self-segregated. I should start with that. It wasn't like teachers telling people where to sit. But from the time my high school was built in the 1800s, till now – there have been two cafeterias. One cafeteria, the white people sit in. The other cafeteria, the Black people, anyone who is foreign, they sit there. The Chinese, Cape Verdeans, Hispanics – all of them would sit on the Black side. And so that was something that was incredibly weird. 2016, and I'm looking at segregation firsthand. It's really odd. So there is that. Like I said, in my classes, all my peers were now white. So I struggled with "Do I sit on the Black side where friends are? Or do I sit with these people who I just came from class with, who I'm going to have to go back to class with?" So sometimes I would get looks. Of course, no one would tell you to get up and leave. No one would tell you you're on the wrong side. But it

was a social thing, everyone knew better. So the few Black kids who did sit on the white side, you'd get some looks. And the few white kids who sat on the Black side, they would also get some looks. So there were comments here and there in my honor classes. There's only one time where I faced clear racism, and that was during the elections. That was my senior year. Donald Trump versus Hillary Clinton. [5] A student came up to me and he said “There's a Trump rally in town. Are you going?” Mind you, I never spoke to the student before so I don't even know why he was talking to me. I was like, “No, I'm not going. Leave me alone” And he was like, “So you're not a Trump supporter?” Like, “No, I'm not a Trump supporter. Barack Obama is my idol. So we'll leave that there.” And then he called me the N word, of course. And that was mind boggling because he said it to my face. It was the first time someone had blatantly called me that out of hatred. That was tough to deal with. My school did take disciplinary actions against him, he was suspended. So they took care of it. But still, it hurt for lack of better words.

GABBIDON: I hate people sometimes. People suck. How have these encounters influenced your identity as a Black man?

DUFORT: All of these things in high school were overwhelming. So I chose not really to think about it. Just do my work, get to college. That was always the dream. “I really want to make it to college. I really want to make my parents proud.” So when I got to college, that's when I actually got the time to think about everything, think about the way my high school was set up. The way elementary school is set up. The racial encounters I had. That's when I really started to think “This isn't fair and I have two options.” Basically, I could turn a blind eye like everyone else, and continue to work on my own path. Or I could try to do the best that I can to make a change, even if it is small. And so I decided I will always try my best to make the change, as long as it has to do with advancing people, Black people specifically, or anyone who's not as privileged. I'm going to do my best to do that. I realize how hard it is for Black men, and I feel like if more work was put into the system, there would be more change. There would be positive outcomes. I feel like there's not enough people who care right now and not enough people are doing anything to change things.

GABBIDON: So as an activist, you’ve been involved in a lot of protests and demonstrations. So can you tell me about the peaceful march to the Norwich police department and what that day was for? [6]

DUFORT: That was May, right after George Floyd. Obviously, the entire country was in shambles I should say. There was a protest in my town, and everyone showed out. There were a lot of people there. And it was people supporting each other but also people are angry, rightfully so. It was a peaceful protest but it could have easily been something that wasn't peaceful, and I was aware of that. I wanted it to remain peaceful because we are out there for an important cause. The second you start to destroy things, or the second it gets angry, then they use that against us. And they're like “Well, these people are not reliable. You see what they're doing to their own communities, blah, blah, blah.” It was very important to me to make

[5] The 2016 election was controversial with Republican nominee Donald Trump facing the first female Democratic nominee, Hillary Clinton.
[6] Dufort was featured on Good Morning America for leading the BLM protest to the Norwich police department.

sure that our message was being brought across. And so when we marched to the police station, there were of course some people that were angry, and it could have escalated. And so I felt like that was the perfect time to stand up for my people but also do it in a fashion where it's not going to backfire on us. And so there wasn't really any preparation for it. It was a time where I felt like I had to stand up. I had a conversation with the chief of police. And it seemed as though he took it well. Following that conversation, following that protest, it's my understanding that there was legislation put in place to stop police brutality in our city and to basically have better communication between the police force and the Black community of our town.

GABBIDON: What major points did you bring up with the chief of police? And what was his immediate reaction to those points?

DUFORT: So the biggest point I made is that he had said something along the lines of “There wasn't really any major police brutality acts in Norwich”. And I thought that was very ignorant. And I said, “Okay, first of all, that's not true. But say it is. The fact that we are afraid is highly inappropriate. We're paying tax dollars for you to protect us. We're paying tax dollars for you to work with us, to build our community. Why are we afraid of you? If I'm driving down the street, and you're driving behind me in your cop car, I shouldn't be afraid. My heart shouldn’t start racing. If I'm walking across a police officer, the same thing.” I said, “The issue is we are afraid. People are afraid that when they encounter the police, that could potentially be their last encounter. And you need to make sure you change that. We can't change that. That has to be your responsibility.” He was in the spotlight. So his reaction was “Yeah, we're gonna do that. Blah, blah, blah.” And that was another thing I addressed, “We don't want to hear words anymore. We don't want to hear promises. We want to see the change. We want to see what you're actually doing.” So then, I believe there were several meetings between the chief of police, the mayor, our councilman, and then they started to do some things to ease the tension in our town.

GABBIDON: How do you think the death of George Floyd personally impacted your life and impacted the country as a whole?

DUFORT: My life, I forced myself to watch the video. It was very gruesome. And of course, I don't think anyone wants to watch another human being die. I forced myself to watch because I don't ever want to feel comfortable. And I don't ever want to feel like, “That's not me, that's not going to happen to me.” I don't want to feel fear for the police but I also want to acknowledge that this can happen to me, and it can happen to a loved one. Therefore, I need to do everything I can to make sure that it doesn't happen anymore. And watching the George Floyd video, as painful as it is, helps. What impact did it have on America? George Floyd was not the first Black man killed by police. He wasn't the first Black man killed by racism. So why are people protesting all of a sudden? Why is this such a big deal? I think it was the first time that people actually saw it firsthand on camera themselves. The only time I could think of before that where there was hardcore proof in front of our eyes was Rodney King. And I mean, he didn't die. I think this was the first time America saw on their device a man die. Like we literally watched that. I think that's what finally changed it because it's not like this was the beginning of racism.

Racism has always been around. Police brutality has always been around but I think it was easier to turn a blind eye to it. It was easier to be like, “I don't see it. It doesn't really exist.” So I think that's what changed it for America.

GABBIDON: How does living in this constant awareness of discomfort influence how you perceive the world and like your optimism about the future?

DUFORT: Yeah, I mean, it's rough. It's really rough. I guess you're structured and guided to live a certain way. I was in middle school when Trayvon Martin was killed, and what was the result? “Okay, no one is allowed to wear hoodies anymore in the school. We're not going to talk about the fact that a Black kid just died. No more for hoodies.” As I was learning to drive, before I actually was on the road I was taught how to approach the police if I'm pulled over. That was the first thing I was taught. “Hands-on the wheel. Ask before reaching the glove department. Walking at night, or walking during the day, make sure you're always cautious.” I think it's ridiculous that we have to live a certain way to feel like we have to protect ourselves. That's something that angers me. When I have children, I don't want to have to teach them how to get pulled over. Am I going to do it? Absolutely because I want them to be safe. But the fact that I have to teach them breaks my heart. I don't even know if that answered your question.

GABBIDON: It definitely did. So as you're learning these lessons on essentially how not to die, how does that impact how you see the police? I mean, that's a lot to learn as a little kid, even as a teenager.

DUFORT: From a very young age, I've been taught to fear the police. I think when you're taught at a young age to fear the police, and you see all this going on, even though you grow up and you're an adult, that fear doesn't go away. You can act like it but when you're getting pulled over, does your heart start to race? When you're walking by a police officer are you making sure everything's good? Or are you going a different path? So I think being taught at a young age to fear the police becomes a lifestyle. It becomes something that's built into you. You have a negative encounter with police, you have a negative image of them, rightfully so. There's no trust between the Black community and the police. And what happens when there's a lack of trust? Tension on both sides. Violence on both sides. The police need to work harder to give themselves a better image, if that's what they want, of course, but I don't know if you can blame the Black community for being fearful. After watching what we've watched, living how we've lived, for years, decades, centuries.

GABBIDON: How could you see the relationship between the Black community and the police improve? And what steps would the police have to take to foster this relationship?

DUFORT: I think the biggest thing police need to do is change their agenda. I think right now, the agenda is “We are at a war against crime.” And basically, if you translate war against crime, we're at war with Black people. “Black people who are doing crime, we need to stop them by any means necessary,” I think if the agenda was switched to, “We need to protect the public, protect the people. That includes Black people.” I think it would be different. I'll give you an example. People who are suffering from substance abuse, and they're under substance so they may not be acting rationally or appropriately. At times they could be a threat to the public but the police also have a responsibility to protect that individual. So if you're responding to that

individual, do you manhandle them and hurt them or even kill them? Or are we going to have a system in play to specifically address people who are suffering from substance abuse? I think the agenda is screwed up. I think the agenda should be to protect all and not just protect certain people. If the Black community were to feel like they're being protected for once, and that the police are there for them, and not against them, I think we could start to see a change in that relationship. But of course, that's going to take a lot. It's going to take a lot of money, it's going to take politicians getting off their butts. So it's something that they have to want to do.

GABBIDON: Do you think it's possible for the Black community to gain trust in the police again? Or do you think we're so far down this path of hurt that there's no pulling back from it?

DUFORT: Well today or in the near future? Or long after my time?

GABBIDON: In the near future, we'll say,

DUFORT: No, I don't. For many reasons. I think the first being that police brutality is still going on today. There hasn't been a stop. Sure, it's not like on the news like George Floyd was but I mean, I live in Baltimore, a predominantly Black city, and I still see it. So until it's made a national issue, until it's put high on the list of things we need to address – you can't expect Black people to not fear the police. I guess I'm saying that nothing is being done right now. So why would the relationship change? Why would you expect Black people to be like, “Okay, let's give this a try. Let's forgive our oppressors.” And the hurt is still going on. I think if there is a stop, if we actually saw progress if we saw change? Yes, I do think the Black community can move forward. I do think that change could come. But right now, that's not happening. Right now, it's not a priority at all.

GABBIDON: What journey do you personally want to take with your activism going forward? And how do you want to manage getting a degree and also being an advocate?

DUFFORT: First things first, police brutality, racism is not a priority. So it's my goal to make it a priority. And I know I can't do it by myself, nor do I want to do it by myself, but if there are others who are out there, who have that same ideology, then together – we can make it a priority. Because numbers make strength. Martin Luther King could not make the change he made by himself. Although it seems like he did a lot by himself, he didn’t. He had an entire community behind him. And so that's what needs to happen again, a community needs to come up to make these issues a priority. I'm using my degree. As you know, I'm currently in law school. And so my goal is to defend juveniles who are predominantly Black or minorities. Because another issue that's dear to my heart is I feel as though youth are being punished too harshly for things that kids do. It’s not to say kids don’t deserve a slap on the wrist when they do bad things but there are certain crimes that are done that we need to look into why these crimes are happening. And look at how we can avoid those crimes rather than sentencing youth to years in prison and then setting them up for a life of crime. So my goal is to potentially save these youth, protect them from jail, help them to get on the right path so that they can contribute to making the Black agenda a priority.

GABBIDON: That's amazing. What an achievement that you think you've actually facilitated for

the Black community that you're proud of, and what's something that you look back on and view what you've done as progress?

DUFORT: I think I would go back to high school. When I got to high school, the NAACP chapter or club at our school was pretty weak. I think there was one student in it and their grandmother was a part of the NAACP, so that doesn't really count. When I got in, I worked really hard to get membership up, to do things for Black students. And we struggled at first, it was hard to get membership. But towards the end, we had a good number of members. We had a banquet celebrating Black excellence. We raised money to send students to a national competition held by the National NAACP and it's called ACT-SO if you've never heard of it. And basically, Black people from all over America will meet at one central location. And you'll compete for your talent. So there's music, art, science, mathematics. Any field you can think of. Entrepreneurship, acting. We were able to send a good amount of people there, and I think it was great. I think it taught people to be passionate about what they want to do. I think it gave the people of our community hope, because like I said, the YMCA shut down. There weren't many extracurricular activities for us outside of sports at our school. And if you didn't make the team, then you're out of luck. So I think that was something that gave a lot of people hope. And the trend continued. Even after I left, people were continuously going to that competition, continuously sending people there. So that's something on a smaller scale. But still, I think it had an impact on my town at least, and it made me really happy.

GABBIDON: What goals do you have for your future, and the future of your respective communities, and what pathways do you feel are most promising?

DUFORT: I think the goal is for my city to be completely different than how it was when I grew up. Meaning, the goal is for there to be a YMCA back there. The goal is to set up activities and things that kids can do, aside from crime. My goal is that the park that I could never go to is filled with kids one day and that kids are playing there. And I think those are very attainable goals because I think those goals need to be met with people who care. If the community cares, and the community works together, those things can happen. So that is a goal that I would like to set up in the near future, and that I'm very positive that we can make that happen. I'm very optimistic about that. Another goal is to then change the dynamic of my high school. Again, I'm going to need help from the community because why is there only three guidance counselors for 600 plus students? That's ridiculous. So if more money needs to be put into guidance counselors so that the caseload of guidance counselors is lower, so be it. That's what needs to happen. I think we also need to look at why there aren't as many Black students in AP classes. When looking at the racial demographics of the school, it would be one thing if the school didn't have many Black students, but there are a number of Black students. So that's another issue that I think can be rectified. I don't think the reason why there aren't Black students in AP classes is because they're not capable. I think we're not guiding them towards that path, we're not setting up options for Black students to go that route. So those are goals of mine in the near future that I would like to take part in. And that I'm fairly confident we can do as a community.

GABBIDON: Is there anything else important that you think people studying this movement should know?

DUFORT: I think the most important thing is, it's really easy to get tired, especially when we've seen very little systematic change. But I'd like to remind people that if the people who came before us got tired, we wouldn't even be where we are today. If Dr. King got tired, Rosa Parks, there are so many others – if all those people who contributed to the civil rights movement got tired, we wouldn't be where we are today. And I'm sure at the time, they didn't think that their change was going to be as big as it was to us today. So I would encourage people. I know it's tiresome. I know it's frustrating. I know it's a burden. But if we continue to work as one as a community, the change will come and it'll be bigger than what we expected.

GABBIDON: That’s beautiful. So I'm going to stay with you for a few minutes after ending this recording, but I want to thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me and explaining your experiences and your activism. I think my classmates and anyone studying this movement will really appreciate what you've done and what you're going to do.

DUFORT: No problem. Thank you so much for reaching out.