

probably one of the first Masters students of color in chemical engineering there also — if not the first.

GE — What was the climate like for a minority engineering student at that time?

Interesting. I received

guidelines. What it said, basically, was — here are guidelines for local sections to get involved with minority outreach. The model was, sections would receive guidelines from the national office, and local sections were the place to get the work done.

So, we worked hard on that. We knew, for example, that we were the first engineering society to get involved with this type of effort. All the other engineering societies were not involved. We also collaborated with ACS in the New Jersey Section. We got involved with their Project SEED — we actually worked back and forth with ACS. And, Gerry pushed most of that.

GE — Were these career guidance programs?

their meetings. He was the only president who did, in 1988, go to one of the meetings to find out what they were doing.

And so, I would say that the idea for the committee is Jimmy's. I was the implementer – getting people together and giving them assignments. Most of the committee members in the early days I recruited. I recruited by just going up to them at meetings, introducing myself, asking them what they knew about the Minority Affairs Committee — which very few did, and getting them to come to meetings, which they did.

So, I give Jim credit for the idea. Gerry was the one with the idea of getting me. And I'm the implementer for getting the committee started.

GE — So, you've covered a lot of the history of the organization, right up through the launch of the committee in 1990. Having observed the entire history of the MAC organization, before and after it was formally chartered by AIChE, what do you think MAC's most important contributions have been — to the Institute or for engineers?

I think that getting the Institute sensitive to minorities was not an easy job. You know, my presence there — I became a needle — sometimes I think I was annoying people because of it. For example, there was an award they were going to give me, a special award for being involved. I turned it down and I turned it down because, I said, for what I've done for AIChE, I should qualify for one of the major awards. And if not, then it's not worth my getting that special award for minority affairs — if you can't work that into some of the others Institute awards that you have. So, they finally ended up giving me the Van Antwerpen Award, which I think is more appropriate for the type of thing that was done.

But getting people sensitized toward that was not an easy job.

The other day, Gerry and I were looking back on what we were doing, and he pointed out that at

Well, we're trying to decide how much Gerry's going to do and how much I'm going to do. I told Gerry I'll let you do anything he wants, and I'll take on the rest. I think we'll cover much of what we've said here.

I do remember, a sad point, was when Gerry was discussing what had been written for the 75th anniversary of AIChE (in 1983), and how disappointed he was that we hadn't done more.

GE — That you hadn't accomplished more for minority members?

Yes. In the area that he had put a lot of effort into — a lot of heart and soul, to be honest with you. But, when I look back now, we had a model that didn't work. The local sections weren't that sensitive to what we were doing, primarily because there weren't enough sympathetic people on the section level to help. The number of blacks in the local sections was almost nil or nonexistent. That has changed, and the committee really has benefitted greatly from that. My urging is for the committee to get more people involved. And you're going to have to do the same thing I did