

Dr. Todd Shaw: Um, my name, title, and affiliation: uh, Todd C. Shaw. I'm a Associate Professor of Political Science and African-American Studies or my full formal title is the College of Arts and Sciences Associate Professor of Political Science and African American Studies at the University of South Carolina.

Interviewer: Can you tell us a bit about your personal background? So, where you're from or what was your home or family life like for you growing up?

Dr. Todd Shaw: Sure. So, uh, my background is I hail from Indiana, I'm a Hoosier. I was born and raised in Indianapolis, Indiana to James and Ruby Shaw and my family background is one where I've always had sort of very strong connections within Black communities and Black... and particularly to the Black church. My dad was an extraordinary guy. He was among the first African Americans, if not the first African American, to be hired as a loan officer for a major bank in Indiana, Indiana National. My mom was extraordinary in the sense that she was very connected. They both were raised in Richmond, Virginia. They... they fell in love and eventually got married and moved. They were part of the Great Migration sort of North, if you will, in the 1950's, particularly after the Korean War. And so, the upbringing that they gave me and my three older brothers was a was a wonderful upbringing.

Dr. Todd Shaw: Um... uh, we're very much connected to, uh, the church life there. We were raised in a church called Barnes United Methodist Church, which is part of the, uh, the United Methodist, uh, denomination, but, um, it was it's a African American led church. So, uh, between my father's business acumen, my... my mom being, uh, well she was really sort of, uh, at the heart of our thinking about education. She was always very conscientious about her boys getting their schoolwork done, us reading, she would take us to the library. I think my mom in an alternate life was a teacher and so in some ways, I think her influence on me, um... uh, as profound as my father in the sense of her being a teacher and my... my dad connecting me to the community, connected me to think about business, but then also about politics.

Dr. Todd Shaw: I'll say one other really key influence as to how I became a political scientist earlier on is that at our church, Barnes United Methodist, our pastor at the time, Pastor Holloway, would after church invite the public officials, public leaders, candidates to come and speak to the church. He made it a point, he says, "I'm not endorsing anyone, however councilman Glenn Howard is here to talk to the congregation". And I was always fascinated to stay after church. I said, "Dad, can I stay afterwards and listen to what the coun... you know what the council member has to say?" So, I think that was sort of my nascent, sort of dipping my toe into an interest in politics because I was fascinated by the politics of... of the Black community and other communities in Indianapolis. And in fact, I wrote a senior thesis about Indianapolis Black

politics partly as a result of some of those things. And so those were some of my earliest influences in my background.

Interviewer: Well, I was going to ask you, how are you introduced to the field of political science?

Dr. Todd Shaw: Well now, how I was introduced formally to the field of political science was my education at Howard University. So, I attended Howard University from 1983 to 1987 and my mentors there. Uh, earlier on I was a major... I had... I had a minor in sociology, and I was sort of thinking about, um, at some point being a Black Minister, a Black preacher, uh, at one point. My... I think my mom might have teased me a little, she says, "well you started off maybe being a Black preacher and now that you want to study these things related to Black politics maybe you want to preach about being Black." So in that regard, um, my formative years at Howard University were... were quite instrumental, uh, being introduced to, uh, really sort of some legends in our field. Uh, for instance, Dr. Ronald Walters, uh, who Ron Walters with both a, um, sort of guiding star of Black politics nationally and internationally, that he had been very involved in the... the emergence of the Black Power convention.

Dr. Todd Shaw: He wrote some of the earlier works... joined some of the other founders of the field of Black politics in what he wrote, um, not only just from a domestic, from international standpoint. And then Ron Walters would go on to become a domestic policy advisor for Reverend Jesse Jackson. So, sitting in Dr. Walter's class where he says, you know, he wasn't just talking in theory, he knew these individuals. He... he could teach you about South African politics given that he knew... he was connected to some of these politics himself and he advised Canada Jackson on these politics and then would go on and write a very similar book on Black presidential politics. So, Ronald Walters... Another great influence for me was... was Linda Williams, uh, Dr. Linda Williams. Dr. Williams I will kind of really, really credit my connection to political science because she took me to my first conference.

Dr. Todd Shaw: Um, she hired me and another young man by the name of Fred Harris and Dr. Frederick Harris is now at Columbia University. She hired us as research assistants at the Joint Center for Political Studies and that's when I began to sort of say maybe I'll do a little sociology on the side, but I think I like... I like studying politics. And so, she took us to our first conference, the NCOBPS conference, I think that was in 1987 if I'm not mistaken, and it was just sort of fascinating. I got to... to, uh, attend that conference there, um, I think then candidate or maybe mayor, Harold Washington spoke, the first Black mayor of Chicago. Um, and I really do credit Linda Williams sort of introducing me to political science and at the same time she introduced me to NCOBPS. Because that was my... my first professional conference as an undergraduate and it was the first professional conference I attended was the National

Conference of Black Political Scientists. So ever since that time, you know, really becoming this idea of becoming a political scientist she, Ron Walters, and others, Joe McCormick, Robert Smith, they... they planted those seeds in my mind and they kind of grew.

Interviewer: Wonderful, uh, and what about graduate school?

Dr. Todd Shaw: So, um, initially when I was thinking about graduate school I said to my mentors at the time, I said, "Well, Howard University." This is the institution of Ralph Bunche, of one of my mentors who would become... one of the individuals to become my mentor, Haynes Walton. He got his PhD as one of the earliest PhDs from... from Howard University. I said, "Well, Howard University would be a great place for me to get my PhD. My mentors advised me to say, "We love you. Uh, sure, we would love you to own faculty but go away and come back." And so, they encouraged me to go to the University of Michigan, um, and in fact, I was looking around and I didn't know much about Michigan, and... but... but I soon grew to understand what its reputation was. And so, they encouraged me to apply, I know Linda Williams encouraged me to apply. And they knew something about the fact that Michigan at least had a buddy number of political scientists. I think even prior to then Michael Dawson had been recently hired there, who would become one of my mentors and until this day is a... is a seminal influence in our, uh, in our field of Black politics.

Dr. Todd Shaw: Uh, and so, you know, they kind of sent me off to Michigan and I came to find out that there's actually a bit of a... a bit of a, uh, conveyor belt, maybe that's a little glib, but there's a little bit of a, uh, a... a process by which many Howard students would be courted by Michigan. Because I met some other Howard students when I got there: Robert Sellers in Psychology, uh, Julia McAdoo in Psychology, um uh sort of several other folks and so, I said, "Oh, well I see why Howard students are showing up here at Michigan, uh, because we're being recruited you know to kind of attend Michigan." Um, so that was really quite key. Uh, I also will credit, um, Catherine Tate. Catherine Tate was also... she was a graduate student at the time, she was an advanced graduate student getting near to defending her dissertation. And Catherine Tate took me, uh, gave me a wonderful tour, her and others that were there, gave me a wonderful campus tour before I accepted. And I'll tell a... a... I'll tell a humorous story I've never told publicly.

Dr. Todd Shaw: But, uh, I got to Michigan and I... and Catherine was giving me just a great tour, giving me great advice, you know making sure that I was accommodated along with the other students who were on recruitment weekend. And so, Catherine she was taking me to the airport, and she says, "Well, what do you think Todd? Are you thinking... are you thinking of coming to Michigan?" I said, "You know Catherine, this is... this is great. This is great. I really like the cohort of folk here, I think I am." But I... I said more than I should have said, I should have kept

my mouth shut because I said, "You know, I think I'll go attend Michigan, uh, get my master's degree and then I'll look elsewhere for my doctorate." She almost stopped the car. She said, "Todd you've been accepted to the doctoral program." I said, "Oh!" And so, you know, to this day I think you know I really do credit her for... for not spilling the beans on me, not knowing that I have been accepted to the doctoral program. But, you know, that's... that's essentially you know even though I became... came from a middle-class family that's, you know uh, no one else in my family had attended a PhD program. So, they could give me love and encouragement, they knew what it meant, but they couldn't tell me all the ins and outs. And so, I appreciate... Catherine probably hasn't ever told that story on me so I'm... I can tell it on myself.

Interviewer: Uh and so, just to clarify, uh, your parents they had gone to college as well?

Dr. Todd Shaw: Yes so, my, well my dad he... he finished up at Indiana Central University with his business administration degree. My mom would have finished at Virginia Union. Uh she... she, uh, she tells me the story that, uh, she went to her mom one day and said, "You know, I think I'm gonna sit out from school just a semester or so, if you don't mind." And her mom said, "Well, okay." And she didn't and she didn't go back, but, uh, my mom to this day is one of the most educated persons I know and if I... if I know how to conjugate verbs properly it's because she was probably going to be an English teacher one day.

Interviewer: I see. Uh, and how would you characterize the political, social environment in the U.S. while you were in college or graduate school?

Dr. Todd Shaw: So, this is the... this is the 1980's from the Reagan into the Bush years. Um, this is also a period of the emergence of the... of a number of African Americans to elected office. You know, as I mentioned, Harold Washington in Chicago. Um, Chicago being pivotal because it would, you know, of course it would come on... later on become that city from which Barack Obama emerged, but prior to then was Jesse Jackson. Um, and Reverend Jackson's influence in... in American politics and in African American politics can't be understated. Um, I think in some ways to this day he's not given credit for all the things that he did, um, and... but I observed that even as a college student. I... to this day I was going through my, um, some of my, uh, memorabilia up in my attic and I had a picture of Jesse Jackson when he ran for president, and I remember sticking that picture on my um bulletin board when I was a freshman at Howard University. And my roommate at the time said, "That's nice, but you... you know he's not gonna become president." I said, "Jesse Jackson's a smart man."

Dr. Todd Shaw: You know and... and, uh you know, and even though he's... he's had the ups and downs and controversies, political controversies in life, Jesse Jackson, uh, to this day can be

credited for registering, um, an enormous numbers of African Americans during that period of the 1980's. That... that period of registration in his campaign had some influence on Democrats being able to retain the Senate, uh, in those mid 80's elections. There are many of folk who can credit Jesse Jackson for their own political careers, but their economic career is partly because of Jesse Jackson's influence and push excel and... and, uh, sort of various other things he did as a citizen diplomat. In fact, there's a book to that effect about Jesse Jackson being a citizen diplomat. So it was a period of Jackson's emergence, the emergence of other Black elected officials, but it was also a period of conservatism. It was a period of discussion questions about, um, as today you know what, uh, what is the place of affirmative action; should it even exist? It was... it was a contentious period in terms of... of, um, of racial violence. Howard Beach and others that occurred during that period. Uh, it was a period as a student at Howard that was fascinating to attend college because I... the first year I got to Washington D.C. to attend Howard University was the 20th anniversary of the March on Washington 1983. And I can remember standing there and seeing some of the luminary individuals speaking.

Dr. Todd Shaw: I can also remember being quite hot as it would be in D.C. in August in 1983. Uh, but I can remember, you know, attending that event. I can remember, again, Jesse Jackson coming to speak on campus. Um, I could... I can remember, again, a number of things, including, uh, that there were some, uh, you know, sort of, uh, Klan marches and... and racial violence or at least the prospects of racial violence in fourth sight Georgia and students being mindful of what was happening there. So, there are ways the 80's kind of parallels some of the aspects of... of the racial politics and the political... politics of today. You know, conservatism, um, and... and some prospects of racial retrenchment and even racial violence as mixed with some degree of hope. And particularly, the emergence of elected officials, um, and... and Black voters mobilizing to elect these, uh, sort of first-time and pioneer individuals like Harold Washington in Chicago.

Interviewer: Thank you. Uh, and to that note, were you involved in any, uh, social or political activism while you were a student?

Dr. Todd Shaw: Um, I was quite involved in social and political activism as a Howard student. Um... um, I... I almost didn't graduate as a result but, uh, but... but all kidding aside yeah, I was... sort of got quite involved in student government at Howard University. Um, when I say I didn't almost graduate, I... I thought about and contemplated one day running for Howard University student body president and then I said that... that, you know, that that may take me away from my four-year plan. And so, uh, but I advise sort of the Howard University student body presidents. I was actually the director of research so, I... when I kind of think about it, even back then at Howard, I was sort of using this idea of being a scholar in service of other things. Um, and one of the things I was involved in is... is a discussion on campus. And we had some tensions with the administration around this question about African American studies being a required course in the College of Arts and Sciences, uh, or the College of Liberal Arts at

Howard. And I kind of led the effort to create a, um, to create, at least, a research piece that talked about the history of whether or not African American studies should be a... a required course and eventually it became one and... and actually, uh, you know, one of our Pan-African Studies Associations. Uh... um, and I think through the... through Dr. Walters recommending my name, gave me a student award as a result of that, so I was quite proud of that. Um, also involved in the disinvestment campaign. This was also the period of South African, uh, toward the end of South African apartheid, but we didn't know that.

Dr. Todd Shaw: And so, as part of student government, we had some of these sort of battles that are true within communities about, you know, what's the right strategy. And so, we were in, at times, in conflict with our administration. Um, you know, even given, I think the... the insights and steady leadership of... of Howard University, at that time, Dr. Dr. James Cheek. But we... we disagreed with the administration because we disagreed with, uh, the... the, uh, investments of the Coca-Cola Corporation. Um, and so we were pushing the... the administration to not take a bulletin board, or actually it was a football field. The athletic scoreboard, uh, Coca-Cola had paid for it. And we said, well, Coca-Cola is still invested in South Africa and so we pushed back on that, um, and not all student groups agreed with us on that. Um, and I won't say student athletes disagree, but not... not everyone agreed with us on that. So, I remember also attending some of the marches at the South African Embassy. I wasn't arrested. I guess I was a little fearful of my mother saying, "what are you doing?" But I did... I do recall going down and at least protesting, not getting arrested, but protesting at the South African Embassy, um, at the time. Uh, and there was other sort of student protests that were occurring. Um, uh, one there was a local D.J. who had made some racist comments. Um, and I was very involved with the student organization that would later on become, um... uh... um, a student organization that went... went to take over the administration building, you know, sort of pressing for student demands. So, it was a bit of a heady period, and I was involved in several things there at the time um to my mother's chagrin.

Dr. Todd Shaw: I'll even say that I, um, one time, uh, when the first lady at the time, Barbara Bush, attended the Howard University Commencement, my mom didn't catch the fact that I was among the students who stood up on the First Lady in protest. Uh, so it was a very heady time at Howard University, and we were... we were kind of very engaged. This political atmosphere that's incredible, especially the talking about transnational solidarity, that's really incredible. Yes... yes, yeah, I mean, I think... I think this was also the period and random Robinson and trans-Africa, you know. So, in... in some ways, Howard University was giving me a global perspective, uh, very much a global perspective and a global perspective on the African diaspora. And I think, to this day, I... I'm mindful of that perspective because of Howard University, because I had students who were from Nigeria or... or uh were from Jamaica. Or from, sort of, you know, we weren't just talking in theory about the global community, we had it there.

Interviewer: Yeah. That's fascinating. Um, can you tell us a bit about your research trajectory? So, what was your dissertation topic, uh, and what's your current main area of focus?

Dr. Todd Shaw: Sure so... so my research focus... um, I now kind of recognize the fact that it's been long in development, as is true for many of us who become senior scholars. Is it... sort of, you start off with a topic and you're not quite certain where it will go, but then you... by the time you're done after 20 or so years, you say, "Oh, I can see the logic of where I was heading." So, my areas of research focus within American politics, you know, broadly is in the area of African American politics, U.S racial and ethnic politics, um, really, Urban politics and then, I would say, sort of, political, um, participation or citizen engagement. The my... my dissertation was, uh, was a dissertation that looked at the question of what constitutes effective grassroots activism in the city of Detroit and the topic, uh, would become my first book with Duke University Press. And so, what I was really kind of asking is, okay, there's a whole series of discussions about what happened to the Civil Rights Movement. You know, what happens... was the movement effective? Did it just elect, um, Black elected officials? But those officials, have they been effective? Have they been held accountable? And so, I wanted to kind of answer that question. Earlier on, um, my dissertation chairs were Dr. Haynes Walton and Dr. Michael Dawson. Now, to have one of those individuals as your dissertation chair is an honor, but to have sort of really between those two, uh, scholars you can say that, um, you really do have two stalwarts of African American politics. I can still, to this day, you know, more than 20 years after my having gotten my doctorate, they still work their way into my work.

Dr. Todd Shaw: And so, my broader research agenda then becomes, what are the sort of political, sociological, um, and... and economic divides within Black communities. That communities at times will be able to come together, but when they also differ. In other words, in some ways I just, I... I have unpacked the question of Black unity and collective action when there isn't Black unity. Is that because, um, there are genuine and necessary divides in community? And when individuals come together in coalition, what does that mean? And in fact, that kind of lends itself to what I'm talking about now in my work about the diverse communities of Black politics. But my dissertation, um, I... I wrote a dissertation that was too long. I wrote a dissertation that was 500 pages and, um, and I can remember Haynes Walton, uh, Haynes Walton, Michael Dawson, um... um, Earl... Earl Lewis, uh, sort of being a Rick Hall, being my committee members. Uh, and they're all kind of commenting on, I'd done a great job, I clearly had, you know, cleared the bar in discussing the topic. But they were all a little puzzled about how I was going to scale this down for a book, and I appreciate the fact that they alerted me that this was far too... far too long. But I think writing that large dissertation made me... sort of, gave me a... a bit of a broad perspective on the topic of grassroots activism in Detroit... I had done a thorough historical chapter with... with some archival resources. I had... I had, uh, pulled together sort of multiple levels of census data. I pulled it, I looked at data with regards to, uh, public allocations, a community of development block grant dollars.

Dr. Todd Shaw: I had done a lot of work. And so, it helped. I... I had a little more work to do, but it really did give me a basis to say, "Okay, you've got all this now. You can scale it down to a book, to a book that... that will make sense. And so, I think, uh, they... they indulge me in writing a dissertation that was so darn long, uh, but they also gave me some great insights, particularly Haines Walton. Um, and I say particularly Haynes Walton because I just want to say in some ways, Haynes was a bit of my administrative chair of my... the dissertation. Michael was my intellectual chair, by that I'm... I mean the theory I was pulling upon was really, kind of, Dawson's notions of... of group interest, of link fate to a degree and the collective action. But Haynes was a... was the chair that kind of kept things on task, and they did... they worked very well in that sense. And so, uh, at one point and... and I'm sure Michael could contest to this as well today. Haynes, at times, would write me a, um, feedback on my dissertation. Uh, not... not sometimes, all the time. Whenever I send him a chapter, he'd send me back feedback. Haynes, even to that day, which was the mid 90's, did not use a computer. He used a typewriter for everything. Haynes wrote me always four, no less than four single space pages and comments on every chapter, single spaced pages. So, me understanding this, how seriously he took what I was doing, and that he took mentoring very seriously was... was just quite an honor and... and... and sort of endeared me to Haynes Walton in many ways. Haynes... Haynes as I've said before, is a product of Howard University, at least in the sense of his doctorate... doctoral work. Uh, and to this day, I wear a baseball cap because of Haynes Walton, uh, which is... which was his signature piece of clothing. So, again the... the work that they did to kind of shape my thinking, um, still to this day shapes my thinking. And I think, this... this fourth book I'm working on with Oxford press, it's... you still can see a lot of Haynes Walton. What he talked about is the contextual variable in his work and a whole lot of Michael Dawson grassroots of link fate and notions of Black solidarity. Those are still two prominent ideas in my work now 20 years later.

Interviewer: Wow, thank you for explaining that.

Dr. Todd Shaw: Sure.

Interviewer: Uh, so we're going to shift gears a little bit.

Dr. Todd Shaw: Sure.

Interviewer: Uh, what does it mean... being a Black political scientist mean to you?

Dr. Todd Shaw: Well, um, what being a Black political scientist means to me, uh, is that you have a... a... a particular community that you can draw on if you choose to. You know, I wouldn't say that it starts off with the notion of obligation or responsibility, I think. Although, I think it entails that, but I think what I've come to understand is that... that, um, really all of us who are scholars and particularly political scientists, we understand that this is not ace. That... that you don't sit alone... sit alone in a cubicle. You don't sit alone, alone in your office and produce great work. You produce great work in community. And so, even though our names might be the first author, or we might be the sole author, we know it was done in community from... from the extensive feedback from others. I think that my generation of Black political scientists and, I'm in my late 50's, greatly benefit from, uh, from the fact that we were both aware of, uh, aware of and knew and got to know and were mentored by the founders of our subfield. Haynes Walton, you know, Lucius... Lucius Barker, uh, you know, uh, May... May King in... in sort of international relations and women, uh, and politics, uh, Jewel Prestige. We were all in that generation who were young enough and old enough to be mentored by the founders. Thus, we knew that the groundwork of work that they did... that they laid the groundwork with of which, I would say, at times political science as a writ large has not given credit to that. Then we also knew of the cutting-edge stuff that Michael Dawson, Kathy Coyne, and others were producing and so, I kind of know, you know, I can call upon the... the, you know, the work of Haynes Walton. I can call on the work of Matthew Holden, of Paula McClain, as part of the... I'm sure Paula would say I'm more... I'm more of the younger generation type. Paula McClain and certainly Diane Pinderhughes, right? And so, knowing that through that work between, sort of, we'll say, the sort of founding generation and then the next generation, means that I feel my scholarship is strong as a political scientist when I can root myself to that scholarship. And not only have I rooted myself to the scholarship, I rooted myself and... and have been connected and greatly benefited from those Black political scientists.

Dr. Todd Shaw: Because they could tell me, you know, I can hear Haynes's voice now. He's like, "Young man, do you really think that you can leave history out?" You know, which would be Haynes because Haynes would spend, you know, this... sort of hours in... in the... in archives digging through archives as a political historian and a political scientist. Michael Dawson, as much as... as formidable of the methodologies he is, Michael Dawson is also a political historian. He would... he would always tell us, "If you don't understand history, if you don't understand the context of the story, it doesn't matter how good the theory is." Don't just take a formal theory or a formal model and think you're going to come up with great political science, and certainly, not great Black politics. So... so, I think, for me, being a Black political scientist is being connected to that community and... and recognizing that that community is... is pivotal in you being a good scholar. Um, and of course, it isn't just Black political scientists, but... but there's a particular way in which Black political scientists knowing your walk, knowing your own identity in the communities you're connected to, uh, is quite helpful. Um, now I think there's also an obligation, a linked trait, if you will, that I have in being a political scientist and being a Black political scientist, and I think my work having some political relevance to the broader world.

Dr. Todd Shaw: You know, I... I do feel a sense of obligation. Whether it's... whether, um, I should or not, and I think I should. Uh, when communities call on pain, when they say, "Dr. Shaw, could you give a little analysis to this problem? Can you explain the election here? Can you talk to these young people about civic engagement?" So, I think that's also a part of it, but I think I've been fit much more being a Black political scientist and I then, you know, then I think there's any sense of burden of responsibility. There's another thing I want to highlight, um, about being a Black political scientist that's been pivotal, that's the National Conference of Black Political Scientists. I would say, without Linda Williams taking me to that first conference in Chicago, um, I wouldn't have been introduced to this community of scholars and founders of...of my... of my field. Um, and so being able to kind of meet and know Lucius Barker, knowing Haynes Walton before Haynes Walton would become a member of the faculty at Michigan, you know. All of those things were kind of key to my development, um, and I think even my identity of becoming a political scientist. It was formative... it certainly was, it was formative at the, um, at Howard University with my mentors there. Certainly, the University of Michigan was formative, but I think NCOBPS really is the most formative experience because I really got to see the breath of Black political science and Black political scientists.

Dr. Todd Shaw: From again, Jewel Prestige, to Mac Jones, uh, to this day Mac Jones being... being just the... the generous spirit and courtly man that he is, but, you also know that Mac Jones has an intellectual fire and he's always been about economic and racial justice. So, to know that, you know, to be able to talk with Mac and to get some sense about what's important. Uh, and in fact, I'm doing Atlanta politics because I, uh, now... or Atlanta is part of my current work because of, uh, work we read in Robert Smith's course about Mac Jones. So... so, anyway, I wanted to sort of give due credit to NCOBPS. Um, I started off as an undergraduate in 1987 and then several years ago, became a president of NCOBPS. And so, I... and I was quite honored that that my mentors mentored me to the point that folks thought that they should vote for me to become president of the association that groomed me. And there was really no greater honor in my life to become the president of this association. So, I think all those things, uh, NCOBPS still... the deal. Right after I came... you know, became an NCOBPS member, there's no turning back on me being a political scientist and a Black political scientist at that see.

Interviewer: Thank you for that.

Dr. Todd Shaw: Sure.

Interviewer: So what challenges, if any, have you faced throughout your career?

Dr. Todd Shaw: So, I think the challenges I have faced, um, you know, there are times in which we as scholars writ large and then, um, as Black scholars face the imposter syndrome. The University of Michigan, uh, was an absolutely great place for me to study, um to... to get my methodological chops as I did. So, I... I understand... I won't say I'm a methodologist, but I understand, uh, you know, and, you know, I understand sort of various aspects of theory and technique because of Michigan. Um, and I also have a... a great network of friends. Again, among my best friends, um, including Robert Brown. We're from Michigan... my Michigan experience as a graduate student... But there's also imposter syndrome being a student of color and in a sometimes contentious period in history, um, and not always being certain that all the members of the faculty, um, were... were kind of as concerned as you were about issues of... of diversity.

Dr. Todd Shaw: I mean, I remember that we founded an organization at... at Michigan called PSOC, political scientists of color, and I'm proud to know it's going strong. Um, and I do remember when PSOC sort of raised some concerns about, well, you've hired Michael Dawson, but who else might you hire in political science. And Michael Dawson cannot mentor, uh, probably at that time, you know, 12 Black students and... and probably 12 or so Latino students. He can't be the... you know, and he wasn't. I mean there were other individuals like Stephen Rosenstone, Mary Corcoran, etc. But he can't be the only Black political scientist, um, who are mentoring these students and there were other members of the faculty, but Michael was the student who... Uh, and, you know, and I want to give credit to the fact there were other members who were African American, but Michael was in African American politics and racial and ethnic politics and so, he most closely approximated our interest. Having said that, you know, I remember members of faculty saying, "Oh, okay you want to... it's... you're pushing us against the wall. You know, are you making demands on us? You know, and... and so... and I, you know, I... I just interpreted it at times as being the sense of, um, the tension between well what... what are our objectives of our department and... and who should be, uh, what is the broad array of scholars that should be on faculty? I can remember being in the course of a, um, of a faculty member and someone who I respect. I don't know whose work I respect to this day, uh, but, you know, and they were you know a White faculty member and I remember, uh, this was at the time that Jesse Jackson was running for president in 1988. And they said... they laughed out loud in the class, "Can you imagine Jesse Jackson with his finger on the atomic, you know, or nuclear bomb? You know, or on the button?" And I stopped, I said, "I voted for Jesse Jackson." The class became a little quiet. Uh, but I said... I also, you know, but I went and I talked a little bit about Ronald Waters informing me about Jesse Jackson's foreign policy. So again, it was a glib and I would say, racially insensitive at best comment, but I think it... but, you know, I... I don't feel I... I guess even though I say imposter syndrome, in the sense of I felt at that moment that it elicited a response.

Dr. Todd Shaw: I will credit Howard University and my mentors for giving me enough insight to see how I should respond. So, not to jump on top of the table, but just to plainly state the facts.

Jesse Jackson had a... has a... had a fairly... had a formidable foreign policy, international policy, and nuclear policy regiment as part of his presidential agenda. I know because I talked with a man and was mentored by the man who helped him devise it. So, that's a good scholarly response to that concern, right? Um, and... and so there's been subtle sort of things and I can't... and I've been, you know... I'll just say it, I've been blessed in my career. That... that I've had a network of colleagues and friends, um, across racial and ethnic groups, uh, who... who have supported my work and who I've mentored, uh, and who've mentored me and... and I have published with. But I'm also aware of... of the situation of others, and so even if I can say a few things that are true about my career, uh, and a few incidents that occurred in... in the context of do... I belong... I know of many more that have happened to others. And that's so... so, however I can be a resource in doing that because, I think, because that notion of Black fate. Yeah, well what happens to other Black political scientists other... other, uh, political scientists of color have an impact on my thinking, and I want to be there for them. It means that it's... it's not just about me. And so... so, in that regard, you know, I again... I believe I've been quite fortunate, you know, not a lot of pushback, and challenges, and keyways. Uh, but I'm aware through direct contact with others and those being friends and colleagues, of what is... what's occurred more broadly.

Interviewer: ...In order to further diversify the discipline and make it more equitable and welcoming uh to scholars of color in the profession.

Dr. Todd Shaw: Well, I think that, um, that there have been several developments, um, and... and having served on... and... and being happy to serve on the, uh, executive Council of the American Political Science Association. You know, I know there are several developments that have happened within APSA, uh, that are, uh, particularly in the question of diversity and inclusion that have... have moved us in the right direction. And... and I want to give do credit to APSA for the vision that it's had, um, in doing so and particularly to... to you know Steve Smith and then Kim, Dr. Kim Mealy, uh, for all the ways in which they've had vision in that regard as... as others such as Michael Brittnall and preceding, uh, Steve Smith. However, I think that the... the challenge we face is, in some regards, and having served as a department chair I know this to be the case, departments can be well-meaning in trying to bridge gaps, trying to recruit women, uh, and faculty of color among others. But our... our social and intellectual networks such that we can do that, like for instance, um, do department chairs know of what's happening at the National Conference of Black Political Scientists? Are they aware of the range of absolute brilliance that's being offered at this conference and do we have ways to connect? Though... and I'm saying departments, um, more... more likely and predominantly, you know, or PWI institutions but this could be across the board in other institutions. Do we know how to really create networks and ties that would say, okay, by virtue of the fact that... and I can give examples of, well, I know who I've mentored. I know where they are now and can I go back to a department and say to them, "Listen, this is a person I've mentored. They're a student, they're now at this ivy league institution, keep your eye on them." I think it's the... having those networks of individuals who can be pivotal in departments to do that. And it shouldn't be all Black and Latino Scholars, but

scholars who will say, “Listen, uh, beyond the let's cast a wide net for recruitment of faculty or students, you can't just cast a wide net. You can't just put an ad in a... in a paper.” And I'll be in trouble with the executive director of NCOBPS if I say don't... don't advertise in NCOBPS newsletter for positions. Do that, but that's the starting point. The next set of steps is to say, “Who do we know?” Who can connect us to... and have real-time conversations, not just at the at... at a broad sort of job fairs, which are important because you can cast a broad net and miss those individuals who you don't know. But do you have a critical mass of individuals on the department... in departments who are not just dedicated?

Dr. Todd Shaw: Because I think a lot of folks are... their hearts in the right place, but do they actually have the social networks and ties that they can go out and talk with someone, who can talk with someone, who can connect them to these up and coming scholars? So that's key. I think there's also a degree to which departments, and I'll say this as a former department chair, should not have amnesia... amnesia. And by this, I mean don't just recruit well for one year. You say, “Well, we missed that scholar of color, that... that, uh, that... that scholar who is a woman or a woman of color. We missed out on that person, let's start all over again next year.” Go into your files and say, “Well, who did we say no to or who almost made the cut?” And even if they are now going... and I can... I can cite that they're, you know, at institutions the person didn't get a job interview possibly here or they did. And so, that institution doesn't hire... put them on the list, but then they get a job offer somewhere else at an institution that's up here or even more highly ranked. Departments should learn from their patterns to say, “Okay, let's just open up our own files, look and see who has come through, and where did they go. And if you map and see that they're now somewhere else, well, what decision led us to this? And that's not to say that they're not making excellent decisions. Departments will work in their own interest to hire the best that they can hire, but maybe the question is how broadly should we think about this? Can we just hire one person? Do we have to do what we... can resources being tight among provost and deans to say, if we don't hire at least two people at the same time, who can be a critical mass? Then we hire one person and then they're the star, they're recruited elsewhere. We have to start this all over again. You hire two people, or a critical mass, if you can or you hire a cohort. They serve as a cohort to each other. They serve... they... they reinforce because they publish with each other, they... they share teaching, they do other things as a cohort, and then, that's a retention policy is really what it is. You know, and... and so I think a critical mass approach is really quite key so... so, you know, I guess again in review, it's sort of that idea of making... having those ties and thinking very concretely of being committed to coming to various conferences. The Bunche Institute the to... to NCOBPS to the we... Western to... to talk with, uh... uh, sort of various Latino professional caucuses. Be that. Show up and be there. Don't just cast a... a broad net then, likewise, go into your own files and think about, well, who didn't... who might have been a prospect, but who... who didn't, uh, and where are they now? And learn from what you've done previously and then, you know, and... and then, you know, likewise, you know, just sort of think through all the... the mentoring or the or the critical mass of when people get there. You know, how can we create a community that keeps them, not just attracts them?

Interviewer: That was very insightful.

Dr. Todd Shaw: Thank you.

Interviewer: Um, well in addition to the existing diversity equity and inclusion programming, what is your advice to associations like NCOBPS or APSA on how to best support Black scholars in the profession as they approach milestones in their career?

Dr. Todd Shaw: Well, I think that, um, that, uh, particularly through the efforts, um, of current and... and previous APSA presidents, um, APSA has collected a wealth of... of knowledge on this question. Uh, and particularly by way of the presidential task force, and I'll just reference particularly the work that, um, that Diane Pinderhughes did during her presidency and then also Paula McClain. Um, and... and particularly I think for APSA, as the noise has, but to even take more to heart, McClain sort of, uh, methodical approach, I would argue. And asking these questions about gaps in the profession and what we can do now. I say that and I'm a little self-interested in saying that because I served on one of the sub task forces, uh, with his... with Professor Kathy Court and I... think to kind of take to heart. I think APSA does as best as it can or... or, you know, maybe you didn't want to be let off the hook, but... but APSA has done a pretty good job, let me just say, uh, producing some insights about these gaps. About, you know, time to degree relative to students of color, uh, where are folk being recruited? Sort of these various gaps, and particularly among Black and Latino colleagues, the question is implementation in next. And I would say, I say this, again, as a former department chair, if it doesn't happen in the department, it really doesn't happen in the university. That department or division level, however... however, the... the university sort of divides up its academic units is where things happen, and how to translate what it's doing to the objectives of a department is key. Departments, of course, are nested within universities so that's very hard and they have to... they can... they... they contend... not what contend, but they... they are part of a dean's agenda, a provost's agenda, a presidential agenda. So, it's not like department chairs have free reign to do what they can do or whatever they want to do, but department chairs can be informed and equipped with things, I think, to the degree that APSA can continue to press and make, um, you know, sort of critical interventions with department chairs to say, "What information do you need from us to do this better?" Do you, um, is it through... and I've been a part of APSA's mentoring program, uh, to this day still keeping in contact with my mentee. Um, so, you know, do you need resources in that regard? Do you need resources in terms of sort of the candidate pool, you know?

Dr. Todd Shaw: There's the Ralph Bunche. Um, now... now I would also advise APSA to caution departments of using again a few signal things. Ralph Bunche is outstanding, but Paula McClain herself would tell you these are 20 or so scholars, there are others. These are among the best and brightest, but there are others. However, there are ways in which departments may not even make best use of that. If I see, as a political scientist in NCOBPS and in... in APSA and as a Black political scientist, if I see a student has a research... um, has research experience, undergraduate research experience, particularly from Ralph Bunche, that signals something to me. I hope that that signals something to many department chairs or to all department chairs. Not that only Ralph Bunche, but Ralph Bunche is an indicator if we... and we're always looking for indicators of how well a student will do. Having gone through that program, given the number of PhDs it's produced, I would say, don't say no to a broadband scholar. I mean, I know that's a little strong, but I think just to sort of say... um, this comes into the idea of don't have amnesia. Well, what has actually worked? If it worked, why aren't you connected to it? Why aren't you sort of recruiting there? If you say, "Well, we don't have the graduate dollars to do that." Well, I presume that a student might have interest in coming to your department for many reasons, including, of course, resources. Um, and so being competitive in the way you can be competitive is key. And so, I think, you know, that's the challenge that APSA still confronts, is how to get that great... that the sort of... if I would say grassroots level of the department level? To have department chairs know what resources are available and... and that are out there. I think NCOBPS faces a resource challenge, uh, that we're overcoming and that is that NCOBPS does what we do very well, but we've done it with sparse resources for too long. And so, I think part of what this... and I'm involved in the capital campaign with NCOBPS, because I think what that will do is it will provide us with resources for more political scientists who are interested in global Black politics would ever be, their... their ethnic or racial background and more Black political scientists to be connected to NCOBPS.

Dr. Todd Shaw: NCOBPS works too. NCOBPS, we describe ourselves as a family tree and we and... we and... and that's not for our point of exclusion, it just means that we literally can map, here's this person's mentor, who's connected to this person, who's connected to that person etc., etc. And that works, you know, that works in the sense that you know who to call. My students know to call me. So, yeah. Well, you know, they still call me Dr. Shaw, but I... I asked them to call me Todd or Doc. You know, want to talk with you.... I'm thinking through something. Well, when we meet at NCOBPS, we get a longer conversation than we could get as sort of the given... given the ways in which people get busy in their schedules, uh, from here, you know, from, um, sort of the day-to-day, uh, back and forth over a phone. So... so I think NCOBPS resource challenge, it will overcome APSA as information challenge. It will overcome, but... but they have to sort of continue to work hard on those challenges, uh, because we know the environment... the environment is only getting more choppy. You know, there's only talking about politics, talking about race and politics, it's only becoming more contentious in American society. And so, we... we're political scientists, we know the real challenges. Now, how to close those gaps at the levels that will matter is... is what I think is key.

Interviewer: So, shifting gears, again, you have held a number of leadership positions in the profession, including former NCOBPS president and as a former APSA council member. So, what in your view makes a good leader?

Dr. Todd Shaw: My view of a good leader, um, you know, I don't want to sound too trite, but a good leader is a good listener. A good leader is and... and I... I come from a model as... as I know many of us would, of democratic leadership. So, a good leader is... is one who will first and foremost not set the priority but call people together to formulate their thinking about what should be the priority. Um, a good leader kind of cares enough to be compassionate. You know, I really don't think I, you know, the individuals who I would say I admire, you know, globally or... or naturally or locally if... if... I've admired some aspects of their leadership, it's because, you know, they're not arrogant individuals. They don't... they didn't particularly care, or they don't particularly care if they got the credit. They care that people were served, that... that things got done, that students were mentored and went on to... to pursue whatever careers they were interested in. Uh, and... and to me, I would also say in terms of associational membership, a leadership within a profession or professional association. There's a lot of there are a... a lot of ways that you have to be mindful of the constituencies that you're serving because there's a natural or not so a natural hierarchy. You have senior colleagues, you have members of the faculty, you have faculty members who are part of a professional faculty, you have tenured, you know, folklore tenure track, or tenure at R1 institutions versus community colleges, then you have array of graduate students and undergraduates. And that's a fairly... it's a, you know, a long line of... of a career progression. But that's... each of those levels have distinct needs and interests. Undergraduates don't have exactly the same concerns and interests as do graduate students, although they overlap quite a bit. Faculty at... at institutions with resource challenges, well that's probably all of us but... but even more research challenges are more or are... have a set of concerns. They're teaching more classes, they're mentoring more students maybe more broadly, and they don't have research budgets to call on our travel budgets, to call on to do things, um, or... or as much as one would at an R1 institution or an ivy league institution or you know a leading public institution. So, if you're going to be a... a leader in an association, you've got to be mindful of all those needs and constituencies and be open to and... and clear about how to serve all of those needs. And... and you have to have this, sort of, not be arrogant. Be a good leader... a leader and compassionate, um, and certainly not be myopic. So, to have a broad enough view to say, "Okay, um, I can't get it all done, but I am going to listen to concerns." I'm gonna... I'm gonna listen to where individuals think we should go, what the other person needs. Then I'm proposing an agenda for folk to give further feedback and approval on before we move. So, a good coordinator is a good leader, yeah, is how I would how I would characterize it.

Interviewer: And lastly, do you have any advice for junior scholars who are coming up in the profession?

Dr. Todd Shaw: Sure.

Dr. Todd Shaw: Uh, I the advice I will give to junior scholars coming up in the profession is advice I got, um, a short while ago from two scholars who loom large in my career. Uh, one very directly is Haynes Walton and Haynes Walton would... would tell us as junior scholars, and I could hear his voice to this day, “Young man, it's a marathon, not a... not a sprint.” Yeah, to be a scholar is to... and... and I know that individuals might be on a time clock if you're in the tenure track or even if you're contractual. You're thinking day to day, year to year, you know, month to month, year to year. What am I going to get done for promotion? You know, the... the pressures that I feel in coursework and everywhere, but the sort of... and so I know that doesn't give us the... the... the sense of long view but it's... it's helpful to have a long view to say, well, what is my research agenda? You know, or what is my teaching mission? What do I really want to accomplish and get out of this enterprise? And so, you know, and that's not the easy thing because again we don't... we, you know, life is life and we have... we have, you know, joys and traumas. And so, it's not always easy to kind of to map that out. But to... to... but I'd understand what Haynes meant is that you don't... don't feel like... I think he implied that if... if your dissertation, uh, you know Todd, if the best thing you've ever produced is your dissertation, oh, you know, maybe think of the dissertation is good. But, you know, what's the next wrong. You know, what's the next thing I want to do, even if I'm going to be more at a teaching institution. If the first class I... I prepared is the last class I'll prepare, and you know then... then I'm not, you know, I'm not sort of sort of slowly thinking about well what's the long-term joy I want to get out of this and long-term objective I want to meet then.

Dr. Todd Shaw: Matthew Holden, uh, once said to me, “Don't be afraid to be wrong, just be afraid to think small ideas...” Small ideas... so, and Matthew Holden, I don't think gets enough credit for big ideas in Black politics. Um, and some of the similar work he did early on in Black politics, um, particularly with regards to race republic in the nation. Uh, and so I took that to heart when Matthew... because I said to... to Professor Holden, I said, I can remember he was visiting the University of Illinois and I said, “You know, I'm trying to sort out this model and... and I'm a little timid or afraid to think that I am... I'm really saying too much.” And he says, “Don't be afraid to be wrong, just be afraid that you're... that you're, you know, small ideas.” You and... and so, I've kind of taken that to heart. I'm saying well, you know, what, um, my first book, uh, project, um, I will almost sound like a physicist when I say this, but it was really about time. And because it was entitled, “Now is the Time”. You know, I was talking about grassroots activism, but I was dealing with the broad dimension of, well, what... how does time matter in human affairs? But, you know, almost more specifically in grassroots activism, the... the new project, the new project is about place now. It's about, you know, sort of finding home, the diverse communities, the Black, uh, politics. But it's really about what... what do I as a scholar think about the contextual variable or place? So those two pieces of advice have served me well

in my career. Um, and so don't... don't be timid. You can... you'll be wrong. I'm sure, you'll be wrong. You know, we'll run some models and they're not correct, you know, and you'll go to a conference presentation and know you haven't cited the pivotal work, um, and... and, you know, uh, and mentors and friends will reinforce you and take you out for beer if you feel badly about it. But at the same time, it's okay. It's okay. I mean quite frankly, a social scientist, you know, a key word in social sciences: a scientist. It's going to be trial and error in life and in your work. Um, but keep at it. Find your joy in it and don't be afraid to be wrong, just be afraid to be small in your ideas.

Interviewer: Thank you for that.

Dr. Todd Shaw: Sure.

Interviewer: So, before we wrap up, is there anything else that you would like to share with us today?

Dr. Todd Shaw: Um, well, um... I think, um, I want to thank APSA for this project. I want to thank, um... uh, in particular the... the first equity inclusion department for this project. I think documenting this history is quite key and, um, and... and it's really important for us to document, uh, the individuals throughout political science who are legendary, individuals, um, and... and individuals who did it through their brilliance, but great humility. Um, you know, conveyed something... I'm thinking now of the work of Eleanor Olstrom. I never met Eleanor Olstrom, um, and she... she passed before I had an opportunity to, but her work is kind of large in my work now rather than social capital. And... and seeing the interviews that were done by her as... as a... as a woman, as the, you know, the first woman, if I'm not mistaken, to receive the Nobel Prize in economics. If I'm not mistaken, I could be, but I don't know if I am. Um, but... but I got a chance to go back and look at, listen to some interviews she did and... but they were really quite intriguing, you know, to hear. She is a senior scholar and a Nobel Prize winner and as a person who as a woman was speaking about her challenges in political science. Um so... so, this documentation, this history, is quite important. Um, and so never... never got a chance to meet her, she went though at Indiana University and I was raised in Indiana. Never was one of her students, but just listening to those interviews, reading her work, and some of her work being key in my work with regards to aspects of social capital, um, is key. And so, I think this documentation is quite... quite important and I applaud APSA for doing this.