Oral History of Ken Coleman

Interviewed by:
House, Charles

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House: I want you to give me your name, kind of where you were born and raised, and we'll just get started around kind of a brief bio of Ken Coleman.

Coleman: My name is Kenneth L. Coleman. I'm known by "Ken." And I grew up in a small town in Southern Illinois called Centralia, about 15,000 people.

House: Where is Centralia?

Coleman: Centralia is 70 miles southeast of St. Louis, Missouri, 60 miles north of Carbondale, Illinois, where Southern Illinois University is located.

House: Okay. Okay. Brothers and sisters?

Coleman: I have... I had three sisters and one half-brother.

House: Okay.

Coleman: Since then, one sister passed away.

House: And you went through high school there?

Coleman: Yeah. Well, my parents never graduated from high school.

House: Okay.

Coleman: My father, both of them lost their parents early and had to work as quite young people. I went to a segregated grade school in my hometown, all blacks, and then I went to an integrated high school. There was only one high school in my hometown, and it was totally integrated.

House: And that was right after integration was happening?

Coleman: Yeah, well, it was in the late '50s, and so integration was just happening in general around the country. But it wasn't integrated. I remember being a... a senior and getting ready to go off to college and

me and two other black seniors went to the bowling alley, because it wasn't integrated, and the guy told us to get out of there. So, <laughs> wouldn't let us in the bowling alley, yeah. This is 1960.

House: So, you know the routine.

Coleman: Yes.

House: And where did you go to college? Did you go to Southern Illinois?

Coleman: I went to The Ohio State University.

House: Oh, you did?

Coleman: In Columbus. I'm a Buckeye. I was a proud Buckeye!

House: <laughs>

Coleman: And I loved it there.

House: Yeah, what field?

Coleman: Well, my degree is Industrial Management, so it is half in the Industrial Engineering School and half in the Business School, where I-- focus was statistics. So, that's my background. I got interested in the computers, because I answered an ad in the school newspaper for a keypunch operator, and you had to be able to type. I had taken typing in high school, and so I became a keypunch operator in the research center at Ohio State. And from there, I became a computer operator in the research center. And that got me into computers. This is before you could take a degree in computer science. And then, I worked for a year and then went back to get an MBA and at Ohio State in those days, you could have a focus in the business school for your MBA. In fact, you had to have a focus. And my focus was Information Systems. In fact, my class project for graduation was, you had to program in FORTRAN in those days, and I wrote a FORTRAN program to automate a scheduling system, class scheduling system, because The Ohio State system was so terrible.

House: <laughs> So, this would have been about 1965, '66?

Coleman: Yes. I graduated in '60-- I got my bachelor's in '65, and I was in MBA school in '67.

House: Okay. So, an IS school. There weren't many IS schools at that time.

Coleman: Yeah, there was no IS degree yet at Ohio State at that time.

House: Okay. Okay. So, you just kind of had a proclivity for math on the one hand.

Coleman: Yeah, I was-- I was good at math. I started out as a math major, actually, in school.

House: Okay.

Coleman: I planned to be a math major. I was chairman-- I was the president of the Math Club at my high school, and I thought I wanted to be a math teacher, because for a black kid in those days, there were only three options that you thought about. One was to be a schoolteacher. In my hometown, schoolteachers had status. We had one black physician, so, but I didn't think I could afford to go to med school. My father always wanted me to be a doctor and never thought about any other professional careers, because you had no examples to look towards.

House: So, you said three. What's the third?

Coleman: Well, lawyers. People thought about lawyers, but, again, we had no black lawyers at home, so I had no role model to even think about law.

House: So, two professions and teaching were the--

Coleman: Yeah.

House: Okay. But because of this keypunch job, you got interested in computers?

Coleman: Yeah, the keypunch job got me interested in computers. Well, and when I went to college, I didn't think I wanted to teach, and so I started looking around and I felt I was pretty good with people. So, I wanted something that combined my analytical skills with my people skills and I had worked in a factory in the summers and I say, well, so I had envisioned becoming a manufacturing plant supervisor.

House: Okay.

Coleman: That's why I chose a, you know, my degree.

House: That's the business school.

Coleman: Yeah. And now I always remember thinking if I could make $400 a month, I would be rich.

<Laughter>

House: Well! You did all right by that score, right?

Coleman: Yeah, I did all right.

House: Oh, my gosh. Yeah, I remember easily in high school thinking I'll never be as successful as my dad.

Coleman: Yeah, yeah.

House: You know? Oh, my word. So, '67, you're graduating with a master's degree.

Coleman: And then I... I went to-- in the Air Force. I went to Officer Training School. I was a 90-day wonder, so in 90 days, you get commissioned, and I spent the next few years in the Air Force, which got me to Northern California.

House: Okay.

Coleman: I was transferred-- this was during the Vietnam War timeframe, so you're going to get drafted or you're going to volunteer. I mean, everybody...

House: Right, right, right.

Coleman: And so, I decided I didn't want to get drafted, and I volunteered for the Air Force and went to Officer Training School. And I ended up getting transferred to Hamilton Air Force Base just north of the Golden Gate Bridge and... decided to get out in 1972.

House: Okay.

Coleman: And I, there was a captain-- there were only three black officers on the base, and one was a captain. He got out about a year before I did. I sent him a note when I got ready to get out that says, "If you know anybody who might be interested in my resume, please give it to him." Roy Clay had, at that point, had left HP and was running a search company.

House: Oh, okay.

Coleman: He gave my resume to Roy Clay, and the rest is history. Roy Clay introduced me to HP, and that's how all that happened.

House: Okay. Well, Roy talks so well about what you did for the Valley for blacks and for him. So, it's fitting that he was your...

Coleman: He introduced me to the Valley.

House: Yeah, yeah. That's great. See him very often?

Coleman: Actually, I've seen him several times over the last few weeks, but, you know, his health is failing, and so, he doesn't get out very much.

House: That's why I asked.

Coleman: And his son has to, you know, wheel him around in a wheelchair.

House: Yeah, we, you know, I waited too long to interview him, but we went over and interviewed at his home, but he's slipping...

Coleman: Yes.

House: ...and it's unfortunate, but had some great stories.

Coleman: And he's a great man.

House: And I knew him, of course, earlier. And I interviewed him for our book, you know, like a decade ago...

Coleman: Okay.

House: ...and put some stuff in and Bob Grimm says, "That never happened!"

Coleman: <laughs>

House: I said, "Well, he's really clear, and you wouldn't make that story up."

Coleman: <laughs>

House: Yeah, so, it's just great. Okay, so, the rest is history. I don't know the rest, though. So, you have to fill that in. So, here you are at HP.

Coleman: So, I joined HP when it was just taking off in the computer business. And I came--

House: '72, '73?

Coleman: '72.

House: Okay.

Coleman: Okay. I came in as a recruiter. My first day on the job, they gave me a hundred engineering reqs (requisitions), on Day 1.

House: Is that right?

Coleman: That's right. And--

House: Were you in Corporate or were you in a division?

Coleman: The Computer division.

House: Okay.

Coleman: And we were just getting it-- we were just starting to ramp.

House: So, who was... Perkins running it? Ely?

Coleman: Well, Perkins wasn't running it.

House: Terry?

Coleman: No, this is before Paul Ely.

House: Bill Terry was still there.

Coleman: Bill Terry was running it, okay?

House: Okay. A hundred resumes!

Coleman: And I got a hundred resumes, all engineering, because they're just ramping the engineering facet. I mean, they're just getting serious about the business. And I cut my teeth on this industry there, because my life was it was just me as a recruiter. I didn't even have an assistant. I got up at 4 o'clock in the morning, read resumes till 6, 7, get to work by 8, interview till 3 to 4, do reference check, talk to managers, make offers, all right? Get home by 8, eat dinner, and go to bed. Get up at 4 the next morning. I did that for 6 months.

House: Can't!

Coleman: But I knew everything about recruiting engineers that you could know. It was like force-feeding, right?

House: Oh, my God! Talk about immersion!

Coleman: Yeah, like I'm totally immersed in it. And, by the way, <laughs> we had a head hunter-- I can't even remember his name-- that was making about a half a million dollars off of HP, and I cut his fees in about half, because I was doing so much work. And they complained to Dave Packard, and Dave

Packard called me and says, "Boy, so, what's this complaining?" I said, "Sir, you know, I'm new here and I've cut the outside spend about half and I think he's unhappy." He says, "Keep doing it! Okay?" <laughs>

House: Dave said that?

Coleman: Yeah! <laughs>

House: Just keep doing it, huh?

Coleman: Keep doing it.

<Laughter>

House: I love it! You're doing good.

Coleman: And so, anyway, I, in that role, my role there just expanded. I took, from being a recruiter, I built a team around me after 6 months, and then I picked up training and development and some administrative stuff. Then the next thing happened that really helped change my career. The guy who was running HR in Europe, who I had met at a couple meetings, asked me one day when he was in town, "How about would you be interested in going to Europe?" I said, "Send me a ticket." <laughs>

House: Ha! Yeah! That's not hard!

Coleman: And so, I was asked to go create-- at that point, HP was very small in Northern Europe, so Belgium, Holland, Norway, Finland, Denmark, and Sweden. And no country had more than maybe 25 to 50 people. And I-- and that was growing quite rapidly also at that point. This is '74. And I went to create HR for Northern Europe and put in all the kind of--

House: Who was it that asked you?

Coleman: Crawford Beveridge.

House: Oh, really?

Coleman: Yeah. Crawford, who is now the chairman of... Autodesk.

House: Today he is?

Coleman: He's, today, the chairman of Autodesk.

House: Okay.

Coleman: Before that, he was at Sun Microsystems.

House: He was at Sun for a long time.

Coleman: Yeah, for a long time.

House: I knew him both at HP and at Sun.

Coleman: He brought me to Europe. So, I worked for him. And so, I managed and helped build Northern Europe for HP.

House: Okay.

Coleman: And so, that got me-- I learned two things that ended up being important in my life. I learned international...

House: Right.

Coleman: ...and I learned sales, because these are sales companies in each of these countries.

House: Oh, that's right. Yeah, they weren't developed. They weren't the divisions.

Coleman: Right. They were sales companies.

House: Right.

Coleman: So, I learned, I'm in the middle of the sales organization, okay? So, I'm learning all about how that works and how it works internationally, and since there's six countries, I had to appreciate different

cultures and the way people thought about things. And because it was a centralized sales force, that is, a sales force sold different lines of businesses, I learned about the complexities of how do you convince a salesforce that's selling multiple lines to focus on your line, okay? That comes back to matter, and I'll explain to you this way. So, then I get good at-- McCracken, the company decides to create a commercial computing business built around the HP 3000.

House: GSD.

Coleman: A GSD. So, the day McCracken-- McCracken, when I was at DSD as... in HR, McCracken tried to convince me to come work for him in Marketing.

House: Okay.

Coleman: And I said, "No, I'm doing my thing." So, when he had got the job, he called me and says, "Would you consider coming back and being my HR person? I just created this business unit." And I said, "Well, let's talk." And so, I flew back to the U.S., and all I remember, I remember this vividly. McCracken said to me, "Look, I don't know much about HR, but what I've seen, I don't like, but I like what you do. Will you come back and be my HR guy and help this business?" So, I came, and I was, I mean, it was a hard decision, because I had been in Europe for a couple years. I liked it, and I was on a 4-to-5-year assignment, you know?

House: Oh, you were?

Coleman: Yeah.

House: Okay. Yeah, because most of them are only a couple of years.

Coleman: Right.

House: And you had a longer lease.

Coleman: I had a long assignment. And so, I said yes and I came back and I was an employee for GSD. McCracken, his assistant, and Bill Krause were the three people there before me.

House: Okay. So, Bill worked for Ed there. Was he Marketing?

Coleman: Marketing.

House: Okay.

Coleman: So, Bill had been in the field. He was a sales guy, but he came in to run Marketing. So, the original team was me, Mark, and Bill. Me, Bill, and Ed, I'm sorry.

House: Yeah.

Coleman: And then we added other people along the way. And we built that from basically nothing, shipping a 3000 a week, to HPs first day in other business.

House: Oh, yeah, right.

Coleman: And that was like, that was a start-up inside of a bigger company, and we were different. And we just acted different. We thought of ourselves differently. In those days, HP, globally, had blue badges, right, with red writing-- I mean, with white writing. We created white badges with blue writing.

<Laughter>

House: There you go!

Coleman: And the people at Corporate thought we were the rebels, you know?

<Laughter>

Coleman: But, and so, we just, it was fun building the organization. McCracken was a great leader. He was very strategic in thinking. And that's where I first, I think, made my mark in diversity, because HP, first thing, it was a great company, great values, and it was my post-graduate education about management and leadership.

House: Right.

Coleman: And as we built that division, we just recruited more African-American and women talent than other people, just because, why not? And we built a great organization that, you know, really, that HP 3000 division, GSD is the HPE that you know today.

House: Oh, yeah. That is. There's no question about that.

Coleman: Right. I'll tell you a funny little story. GSD, McCracken wanted to call it the Business Computing Division, and Packard wouldn't let that happen. He says, "We're not a-- we're a technical company." So, General System was a compromise.

House: Is that right?

Coleman: Yes, because Packard wouldn't let it...

House: I didn't know that. That makes sense.

Coleman: Yeah, I know.

House: Oh, yeah. <laughs> I love it! I love it. So, you say we just naturally hired, you know, to diverse, because they were there. Was it conscious on your part or Ed's or the pair of you to be aggressive on that, or did it just, it was just a natural-selection process? I mean, a hundred resumes a day, you've got choice.

Coleman: Well, I... Here's the way to think about diversity and recruiting. One is, I had-- I knew places you could go to that maybe if I wasn't a diverse person, you wouldn't go to.

House: Okay.

Coleman: And so, I had connections in the places you might not find. That's one. Two is, I have this strong belief, and that is the average manager in a company, with the best of companies, including SGI and HP and Google, the average manager-- the company says, "We like to maximize the opportunity." But the average manager, especially middle managers, are trying to minimize the risk.

House: Yep.

Coleman: Okay? I don't want to make a hiring mistake.

House: Right.

Coleman: Difference, this, by definition, means more risk, all right? And so, if I went to Stanford and I'm a blue person, another blue person out of Stanford feels less risky than a red person out of Harvard.

House: Yep.

Coleman: Just because I know, I think I know the _____. So, because I was a good recruiter and I had built my reputation on that, if I recommended you talk to this... yellow person, you couldn't say to me, "Well, you don't have good judgment."

House: Yeah.

Coleman: Okay. And so--

House: Your credentials were solid.

Coleman: Solid. And so, I was able to convince people versus talk to candidates I recommend, okay, who might be different than the normal source, and then, because I knew the process and had credibility, I could push back at any of the... the uncomfortableness because the person was different. And so, we just naturally. I never had a chief-diversity person anywhere I was, because I worked so hard at integrating diversity in everything we did. And if you're able to do that, you really don't need-- it's not--

House: Well, you are the chief diversity person.

Coleman: And it's just in the culture.

House: Yeah, it just happened.

Coleman: And so, you're different if you aren't-- if you don't have a diverse group, then you stand out as the difference.

House: Right.

Coleman: Okay. So, it was a very diverse business unit, and we were obviously very successful.

House: Did that get noticed at Palo Alto?

Coleman: Yeah. It got more noticed, actually, even in the division.

House: On the Cupertino site?

Coleman: Yeah, because it was just obvious that, you know, people were-- of all sorts were around. And we were very committed to women. We were ahead of the power curve, not just in--

House: Was Ilene Birkwood there?

Coleman: Yes. She was our-- Ilene Birkwood was responsible for technical writing.

House: Yeah, I brought her up to Corporate Engineering, and she was terrific.

Coleman: She was great. Yeah. Yeah.

House: And then she hired, you know, I mean, talk about hiring diversely.

Coleman: Yes. She's a great woman.

House: She was just fabulous, including the gal I'm now married to, so I really appreciate that.

<Laughter>

House: Which was a long shot. Okay. So, that was your HP experience.

Coleman: Right.

House: And how long were you at GSD?

Coleman: Well, I was at HD for 10 years, okay. So, my first two years at DSD, my next two years in Europe, and then I was at GSD from '76 until... '80 and then I spent from '80 to '82 when I left at Corporate.

House: Oh, so, you went to Corporate?

Coleman: Yeah.

House: Okay. With who?

Coleman: Doyle, John Doyle was the VP of HR, and I was asked to come up and run Worldwide Staffing.

House: Okay. That was before he became-- that he took the R&D job.

Coleman: Yes, before he took the R&D job. Doyle had been down in the Instrument-- in, no, in...

House: AMD or somewhere like that.

Coleman: Not AMD, uh... the Components Group.

House: Okay.

Coleman: He came out of Components.

House: Okay.

Coleman: And so, he brought me up. I did that two years. And then, by that time, even before that, I was getting called for start-ups...

House: Oh, I bet!

Coleman: ...to come in the-- I was called, I mean, I passed some interesting things ups. I passed up Apple. I passed up the phone people...

House: Rolm?

Coleman: Rolm. I passed up Rolm. But Activision came calling, and I was at Corporate then. When the divisions, it was just I loved it. I didn't particularly like Corporate. And Activision came along, and it was this first videogame-software company independent from Atari.

Coleman: I know. I know it pretty well.

House: And I met Jim Levy, and he swept me off his feet. He was a very--

House: He was a charmer.

Coleman: Yeah, he's a charmer, and he's very charismatic. And two things-- I have two early memories of Activision. Number one was my first day on the job, I was called into a meeting with outside attorneys, because we were getting sued. So, we were getting sued by Atari that claimed you could not do a video game without violating the patent of the hardware supplier. That was a lawsuit. We won that lawsuit, obviously, but that was the claim. And I'm coming from HP, where it's all clean, never any bumps, and I get called first day in the job, new executive, into a lawsuit with lawyers.

House: <laughs> I love it!

Coleman: So, that was a defining moment. The other thing that was really interesting, and I talked to other people about this, I'd been there about 60 days. My boss took me to lunch, Jim Levy, and he says, "I have something to tell you." He says, "You're not doing very well." And I said, "What do you mean?" He says, "You think this is still HP." And he gave me a great example, because when I-- we had a great year my first year there. So, I came there in like February, and we were closing out on a great year. We had-- and a year that it was the fastest-growing company at that time in the history of Silicon Valley. And he said, "I want to do something special for the employees." We had 125 employees at that point. And he said, "I think we'll take them on some trip with their families." And I says, "You can't do that."

<Laughter>

Coleman: I said, "Think about the precedents you cause and whet people's expectation." So, because at HP, we would never have done that. You know, we hadn't done something like that. But the most-- I own a home in Maui now, because we took all 125 employees and their spouses to Maui. But that was an example where... you have to be careful that you have-- you spend time in one culture, one company and realize that when you go to another place, it's a different place. Like I tell people coming out of Google, there will only be one Google, and so trying to duplicate Google was like a false goal, you know? But, anyway, that was-- Activision was great. Jim Levy was a very charismatic leader, and we were growing very rapidly. And then they, that was a... but the big thing in Activision was-- and, again, it caused a huge

change in my career. So, we were growing like this, had gone public, and we hit the wall. And we hit the wall, we thought, because the videogame industry was running out of gas, first, and two is that the home-computer business was going to supplant the videogame machine. That was our view. What really was true, in hindsight, we just had the first game-machine machine transition.

House: Okay, sure.

Coleman: Okay? But since the industry had never seen that before, nobody understood what it meant, including me, okay? And I said, and so, so, we decided we want to shift from being a videogame-software producer to a home-computer-software producer.

House: Okay.

Coleman: And Levy asked me, "Would you--" Well, first Levy asked me, would I run International, because I had positioned myself, after my experience in Europe, to know quite a bit about international. And I had a young son. I said, "No, I don't want to travel that much." And then he asked me to run the game-design organization. I said, okay. <laughs> Everybody looks at me. I'm looking at myself. Do I want to do that? It's not what I had been doing to that date. And the reason Jim asked me to do this is, "Look, you're the best pure manager we have here and we got to make a change from doing video games to doing more than video games and other kinds of software, and would you do it?" And I said yes, and that just changed it. So, I got out of HR and now I'm running engineers and half of them are still game designers. And managing game designers...

House: Oh, yeah.

Coleman: ...which is half rock-star and half software engineer, is like a fascinating experience. I learned a lot about schedules, about motivating technical people, all of that. So, that was a great education for me. And got me out of HR into running a line organization. And I did that for two-and-a-half years, so it was a total of five years at Activision.

House: Okay, okay.

Coleman: And I decided, number one, I didn't want to be the best, the greatest R&D engineering manager. And the videogame business is a fashion industry, which you have to have it in your fingertips, and I'm a practical guy, so I could do a schedule. But could I tell you that this game is going to be a hit, in those days, 18 to 24 months from now for 18-year-old boys? That wasn't me, okay? And so, I said, this is not-- I just never will be great at this, you know, and it's not-- I don't have passion to do this work. Well, back to my McCracken experience. So, the day McCracken decided to go to SGI, he called me and said,

"I want you to join me. I'm going to take this start-up." And I said, "Well, Ed, I just took over Engineering here. I can't do it. I can't leave Levy. I hear you, but I just can't desert him, you know, at this point in the company history." So, when I decided to leave, I decided this in December, I called three people. I called McCracken. I said, "Ed, okay, I'm going to leave Activision... I'd like to talk to you about what I'm going to do." I called Fred Gibbons, who was running Software Publishing, and I says, "I want to talk to you about what I want to do." And I talked to Bill Krause running 3Com. "What do you want to do?" So, Bill said, "Would you be--"

House: Sure, hold, hold it a second. Was Caretha at Software Publishing at that point?

Coleman: Yes.

House: Okay.

Coleman: Yes. Caretha is at-- my wife is at Software Publishing at that point.

House: Okay.

Coleman: So, Bill Krause is at 3Com at that point. So, Bill said, "Would you be interested in running International, because you--" I had positioned myself to know things, you know. I said, "Bill, again, I'm still, don't want to--"

House: You got a young kid at home, yeah.

Coleman: Yeah, I got a young kid. "I don't want to travel like that. Plus, I know you too well, anyway." So, <laughs>, so, that's not my thing. But I just didn't want to travel that much. Fred-- obviously, my wife is working for Fred, so I couldn't work there. He thought I should, at that point, try to be CEO of a small company. What I found-- I did talk to a few. He introduced me to a few people. I looked at the few things. But people would have let me run something, but that would have been a dog, you know. It would have been something not in good shape. And so, and I wasn't driven to be a CEO at that point.

House: So, let me just stop you there to make sure I understand. So, he didn't offer you something at SPC.

Coleman: No.

House: He says what you ought to do is go become a CEO of a start-up.

Coleman: Yeah, an early-stage company, and I'll make some introductions for you...

House: Okay, got it.

Coleman: ...which is what he did.

House: Yeah.

Coleman: Because Fred had been at HP also.

House: Oh, yeah. I knew Freddy there.

Coleman: I recruited Fred.

House: You recruited Fred?

Coleman: I recruited Fred to HP.

House: Did you recruit Ken Fox, too?

Coleman: No. Ken was there before me.

House: Okay. How about Frankenberg? Did you recruit him?

Coleman: Frankenberg was there when I got there. He was a section manager.

House: Okay.

Coleman: Yeah.

House: Did you recruit Howard Smith?

Coleman: Yes.

House: Okay.

Coleman: Yeah. And--

House: I'm sorry. Go on with your story. So, Freddy says go do this one thing and you said not if they're dogs and I don't want to be a CEO.

Coleman: Right. So, McCracken says, "Come and be my VP of HR." I says, "No. I've been there, done that. I don't want to. I'm past doing HR anymore, and there's nothing for me to learn anyway but skill."

House: Right.

Coleman: I've done this twice at two different places. I know I can do it. You know, I believe I can skill, and the only challenge for me is, can I fit the culture of running HR? So, he says, "So, tell me what you want to do... because I can't help you with anybody else until I figure out that we can't work together." Okay? And so, I said, "Well, there's a guy at HP named Bob Boniface," okay? Bob Boniface was the EVP, and he ran pretty much everything at HP that was corporate.

House: Yep.

Coleman: Okay? I said, "That's my model. I want that job."

House: Okay.

Coleman: So, at that point, Mark Perry is NEA, ex-NEA. Mark Perry was the CFO, and he ran Finance and most of Administration.

House: Here, at SGI.

Coleman: At SGI. Okay.

House: Here didn't exist yet. [("Here" refers to the Computer History Museum building where the interview was being conducted)]_.

Coleman: Yeah, right, it didn't exist. But, yeah. And so, Mark Perry and Ed-- and I give Mark a lot of credit. Mark was willing to give up anything that reported to him other than to Core Finance, which is what he did. So, everything like Facilities and IT working for Mark were given to me.

House: Okay.

Coleman: I took HR. I took Purchasing from Manufacturing, etc., and we crafted a role that was pretty much everything that Bob Boniface had, except for Marketing, Corporate Marketing, and Corporate Finance.

House: Okay.

Coleman: And today, it would have been-- be called the Chief Administrative Officer.

House: Yeah. Right.

Coleman: We didn't call it there. And then, over time, for-- because when I joined SGI, it was the $10-million company, okay?

House: This is '85, '86?

Coleman: February '87.

House: February '87. Okay.

Coleman: February '87. That year, we did $10 million.

House: Was the first IRIS workstation out?

Coleman: Yes. Uh... yeah.

House: Okay.

Coleman: Yeah. We did 10, and they had just gone public. I had missed the public window. I say crazy me.

House: Ooh!

Coleman: Yeah.

House: Those are always-- it's better to get it just ahead.

Coleman: Yeah, right, right.

House: <laughs> You've heard that too.

Coleman: Right, no question. But, so, I had that job. And then, over the next... seven years, I had, in addition to Administration, I had a third-party applications group. I had many other things that came in over time and out of the function.

House: Didn't you buy Wavefront and Alias?

Coleman: Yes. Yeah.

House: That was a great set of capability.

Coleman: I was asked, about five years into it, by McCracken... and Perry tried to sell this, too, would I give up Admin and become the Chief Marketing Officer? And I said no, and they thought I was crazy. In hindsight, I'm not sure how smart I was, because at that point in my career, I was enjoying what I was doing. I was very good at it, and I, and in hindsight, I knew I couldn't fail at what I was doing.

House: Okay.

Coleman: Okay? And so, the fear of failure, I believe, kept me doing the job, because I was killing it, okay? I had total credibility with McCracken, across the organization, lots of power. I said to myself, why do I want to take on this challenge, okay, and risk failure?

House: Yeah.

Coleman: So I was a little chicken, to be honest with you. But--

House: I think we've all been there.

Coleman: But in-- after about-- I was there fourteen years, so after about eight/nine years in, we were having trouble in our services business. And we'd gone through like three or four VP of Services.

House: Wow.

Coleman: And we were-- part of our problem was, we were a high margin, high gross margin company, you know, in the '50s. Very high gross margin. And any business that was not that, we thought was a bad business. Well, the service business, as you can know, is not a 50 margin net. The best of service company, you can't-- it just doesn't work that way. And so we just had struggled with it. And I had a reputation all throughout my career of a good manager and good problem-solving. So McCracken one day-- we were complaining in a staff meeting about services, and I'm complaining like everybody else-- and he says, "Why don't you do this job, Coleman?" <laughter> I said, "Me?!"

House: "Me?! What? Huh?!"

Coleman: I said, "What are you talking about?" So McCracken had this style of if you want it, you do something. Every time he saw you, he would tell you, "When are you going to run the service business?" Okay? And he said that to me every day. And so finally, I said, "All right, under one condition. And the condition is if I have the support of my peers, especially Gary Lauer [ph?]." Gary Lauer, at that time, who to recent ran eHealth, but at that time was our VP of Sales. Because I need a partnership with my VP of Sales. And so I went to Gary, said, "Okay, Gary, if I do this job, okay, I need certain things from you. And I don't want to fight you over that. Like I want the guys in the field to work up through the service organization, and not-- and a dotted line to the field sales guys, not a direct line. Otherwise, I don't think I can do what I need to do. I don't want to argue," I needed him. And he said, "Fine," he says, "Great!" So I took over the service business, and we-- there was about 700 people globally in that time.

House: Yeah, you were right around a billion dollars by now?

Coleman: Yeah, yeah. And north of a billion, even. And it had the worst morale in the company, and high turnover. And what I did was, I said, "Okay, I don't have a lot." So I said to myself, "Well, I'm not going to fail with this, okay?" One thing I knew, "I know the company, and I know McCracken and I know my peers. And so I just have to take control of an organization and build a spre-- hire talent, and do what you have to do. But I need to do it fast. I don't have a lot of time to screw around with it." So I did one of the smartest things I've done as a leader, I brought together the Top 25 leaders around the world, and for a

two-day meeting, and I had two objectives! One was to help-- you know, normally you get a new leader, and people take about six to twelve months to figure out the deal with the new leader.

House: Right, right.

Coleman: So I said in the meeting, "I don't have a year for you to figure out who I am. We're going to spend a half-a-day talking about who I am, what I value, ask me questions, so that you won't have to guess about what it means to work for me <inaudible>."

House: Right.

Coleman: And then I had this second belief, which is that the real role of ma-- I mean, I learned this from HP-- is to make the life-- if you want to create a good organization that respects you as a leader, your job is to make the life for your people easier, not harder. Not put stuff on them, take stuff off. And so we spent a day going through what are the top ten most pressing problems that makes life hard in this services business? So we went through a day, you know, from twenty down to ten. And then I said, "Okay, I will own the top two. And my job is to come back with you in 90 days, and show you that I've solved the top two. And I'm going to assign the other eight to people." I solved that problem. And what that did was it showed-- I earned the respect of the team.

House: Right, oh, yeah!

Coleman: Because I solved the hardest problems that made their jobs the most difficult. And I went from, "Who is this guy who doesn't know anything about the service business," to, "A guy who made my life easier." And I turned that organization around. And because I did that really well, I got asked, "Okay, how about picking up sales?"

House: <laughs> "Oh, by the way--"

Coleman: Okay, so I got service and sales, and then I got asked to pick up marketing. So I ran service, sales and marketing.

House: Okay, okay.

Coleman: But the skill that was transferrable was being a problem-solver, being a reasonable leader, and--

House: And somewhere in that time, then Ed left.

Coleman: You know, Ed left after he asked me to run services, but Belluzzo had come in and asked me to run sales and services. And then Bishop, after that, asked me to pick up marketing. So. One at a time.

House: So you stayed through all those transitions.

Coleman: Yes.

House: Stayed till when?

Coleman: I left in 2001. 2001.

House: Okay, now what have you done since?

Coleman: Since then. Oh, first I started a company that in 2001 that was focused-- called ITM Software-- that was focused no enterprise-class software designed to help manage the business side of running IT for a large company. I came up with that idea when I left SGI, like many people, I didn't quite know what I was going to do next. And I had kind of-- you know, I'm in SGI, a systems company during the internet boom/bust. So I'm in the systems business, and I didn't play in that other role. So I wanted to figure out what that world's about, and what it might mean. And I thought I would end up being a private investor and board member and advisor-- kind of what I do today. But I had this i-- as I went around and talked to people, they would say, ask me what had I learned? And one of the thing I learned, the most difficult function that I had managed ever was IT.

House: Really?

Coleman: Yeah. And going-- trying to find a good CIO. And I said, "Well, why is that?" There are a number of reasons. A number of things about how hard it is to run IT, but one was it didn't have good information. And it was a little bit like the cobbler with no kids. And everybody was focused on technology to solve the technical issues inside of IT, but nobody was really focusing in those days on the business issues of running IT. Big budgets, big consumers of capital. Complex human resources model. Off-payroll, on-payroll, decentralized, centralized. I mean, it's a complex business. And in a Fortune 500 company, these are guys that often, and women managing, three/five/six-billion dollar budgets, and they didn't have a good information system. So I actually created the space of Information Technology Business Management. And we sold that company later to BMC. It's a part of BMC right now today. So it

was a problem I understood. You know, and I kind of think about entrepreneurship as like the old HP adage which is "the next bent syndrome," that you're solving a problem that you--

House: You see a big problem, solve it. <inaudible>

<overlapping conversation>

Coleman: That you know yourself, or somebody you know really well, obviously. And so that was that. And then what I do now is I'm on the board of several technology companies. I'm Chairman of one 70-million dollar company that started by somebody who used to work for me at SGI. And then I advise a number of companies, including Pinterest. And I advise Andreessen Horowitz and a small cap private equity firm called Carrick Capital. And my role, whether I'm a board member or an advisor is to take my experience, which I've seen a lot in this industry, and be a good think partner, ask good questions, provide perspective. I'm pretty good at helping people understand how to better manage their relationships. So I'm a relationship advisor. And then I build my career by knowing lots of people around the world, and connecting companies and CEOs to the people that might be helpful. An example, I was with a company this morning, and they have a very exciting product, and they're working with a particular insurance company. Well, I know the Chief Data Officer at that company. I said, "I'll introduce you to the Chief Data Officer." And I kind of do that kind of thing.

House: Okay, you enjoy it?

Coleman: I love it. I love it.

House: You look, yeah, I mean, you're just animated when you--

Coleman: Yeah, I love it! I mean, it's just a fascinating industry. You know, you meet and work around really smart people who are changing the world.

House: Oh, yeah!

Coleman: You know, and I think there's a myth-- a mistaken understanding, it's probably inside the Valley, but definitely outside the Valley, most of the people who work in this industry aren't driven by money.

House: Aren't what?

Coleman: Driven by money. They're driven to make a difference.

House: Right.

Coleman: They want to change the world.

House: I would absolutely agree with that.

Coleman: That smart people come from around the world to this place, because they want to impact on the world. And it's pretty cool. And you meet and work around people like that, it's-- you don't get old.

House: I'll tell you a quick story. So I knew Doug Engelbart, and I met Mark Andreesen. And neither of them had met each other. And I said, "Well, let me introduce the two of you to each other." And I've got a 74-year-old and a 24-years-old standing there shaking hands, each saying, "I've always wanted to meet you!"

Coleman: Uh huh.

House: And it was just-- it was the old meets the new, right? And we had the picture of Gates meeting Hewlett and Packard in the archives downstairs here. And those are-- I mean, those legacy passing-- but this Valley has always been about making a difference.

Coleman: Yes, it has.

House: And the money is fundamentally incidental to many, if not most of the people. Although, they certainly correlate. Well, this has been a great set of stories. And so I have several specific questions. One is do you recall us crossing paths?

Coleman: Barely.

House: What was the circumstance?

Coleman: I thought it was when I was in SGI.

House: Okay.

Coleman: Yeah.

House: Yeah, that's-- just thinking about your time at Activision, I may have crossed paths with you briefly there. Because I interviewed there. I was very excited. I came out from Colorado to work for Doyle, he was running Corporate Engineering, or setting up a new group called Corporate Engineering. And we had an Atari 800. My step-kid had an Atari 800, and all of stuff this Activision stuff shows up at home. You know, and you go, "Wow!" So I sort of beat it right over there to find out what that was about. And it was intoxi-- he was intoxicating.

Coleman: Who, Jim?

House: Jim.

Coleman: Oh, Jim Levy.

House: Yeah, yeah.

Coleman: When we announced the first lay-off, I'll tell you my first lay-off experience. I was brought into a board meeting. We decided we had to have a lay-off. I had never-- I'm from HP. HP had never laid off anybody, right?

House: Ever happened, right?

Coleman: So I can remember sweating under my arms and feeling scared.

House: Oh, yeah! I got a-- everybody's looking at me, including the board, to plan a lay-off plan. <laughter> And I'd never seen a lay-off plan! So that was-- but Levy was so charismatic, that when we announced the lay-off, employees cried, and employees in the parking lot were interviewed by the press, it was such a big event. And employees offered to work for free.

House: Is that right?

Coleman: It was actually amazing. Levy was the most charismatic person I've ever worked around.

House: That's quite a statement for where you've been in your life.

Coleman: Yeah, he was incre--

House: Is he still alive?

Coleman: Yes, he lives in Sonoma County.

House: In where?

Coleman: Sonoma County.

House: We ought to get him on tape down here.

Coleman: Yeah, I can connect you with him. Jim was-- that's a very important part of this history. I mean, it was the first video game software company.

House: Right, right.

Coleman: And he was our leader. It was him and the three Atari guys, who were the technical founders of the company. And they found Levy. You know, our investor was Mayfield was our lead investor.

House: Was it Kevin Fong?

Coleman: No, it was before Kevin. The guy who committed suicide.

House: Oh, yeah. God, he was an old HP guy.

Coleman: Yes. I got a blank on his name.

House: Yeah, me, too, but I know who you mean. (This was Glenn Mueller, of Mayfield Fund)

Coleman: Blank.

House: You know, there isn't much in the history here in terms of oral history, there's not much from SGI either. I was stunned to find that. We don't have McCracken. We don't have Clark. We don't have Jermoluk, we don't have Belluzzo, I don't think.

Coleman: Mike Ramsey.

House: And we have Mike Ramsay.

Coleman: He founded TiVo.

House: Yeah, we ought to have some of those stories.

Coleman: Forest--

House: Tell me about this building!

Coleman: Forest Baskett?

House: Was Forest at SGI?

Coleman: He was our Chief Technology Officer. So Forest. So the history there is Forest and Jim worked at Stanford.

House: Right, I knew that.

Coleman: Okay, and then before that, Forest opened the DEC Research Lab here.

House: Well, before that even he was at _____ Park. He was an old MIT guy. And then a DEC guy and then a Park guy. And then he opened the DEC Research Lab, that brick building down in Palo Alto, yeah.

Coleman: Right, right. And then but he and Clark had taught together at Stanford, that's how they knew each other. And then he came over to be the Chief Technology Officer. So in fact, almost my whole time there, he was the Chief Technology Officer, until he left to go to NEA. And the way all that happened, Kramlich from NEA was an initial funder of SGI.

House: Okay, okay.

Coleman: And Kramlich was on the board the whole time I was at SGI.

House: Yeah, we're interviewing him this same month. We're interviewing Kramlich.

Coleman: Yeah, Dick Kramlich was-- he was on the board my whole time there. He was the one consistent board member for all of my 14 years.

House: When you got to SGI, there were two Steven R. Bournes at SGI when I was there.

Coleman: Yeah. Steven was gone, or he was on his way out when I was there.

House: One was a hardware guy, one was a software guy.

Coleman: Yeah. Neither one of them stayed around.

House: Neither one stayed around.

Coleman: No, when I first got there, I got there before Jermoluk. And a guy, he ended being up was important named Weh Yin [ph?], important technical guy. But Forest was our Chief Technology Officer. Not the VP of Engineering, the Chief Technology Officer when I got there. And Roselee Bonero [ph?] was our VP of Marketing.

House: And Warren Pratt? Do you remember Warren?

Coleman: Yeah, Warren, he came in later. But he was in the low-end business when we created that business. But that was being run by a guy named Mike Ramsay, so on TiVo.

House: Yeah, I knew Mike.

Coleman: Yeah.

House: Mike's an old John Doyle guy.

Coleman: But I don't know if I knew that.

House: Yeah, yeah, Doyle brought him into HP Labs--

Coleman: Oh, was that right?

House: -- to market stuff there. Huh! Okay! And you guys did great for a long time. Hollywood wouldn't be the same without SGI.

Coleman: Yeah, well, but a whole lot of things wouldn't be the same. You know, we created 3D graphics. You know, Jim Clark had this vision, which was, "out of the window graphics."

House: Right!

Coleman: Okay. And we got known more for the movie business, but we transformed a number of industries. You know, the 3D modeling was very applicable in oil discovery. Very important in automobile design. The Triple 7 was the first computer design airplane. That was our-- we did a big ad. That was SGI technology. 3D modeling in the pharmaceutical industry for drug discovery.

House: A lot of health monitoring, too. Wasn't there a lot of--

Coleman: In that industry it was just drug discovery. Modeling. It was chemistry, taking chemistry and doing the models, which is standard today.

House: Right, right, right.

Coleman: But we pioneerd all that stuff. So the big verticals for us was aerospace and automobile, pharmaceuticals, oil and gas, and entertainment. Those were our big verticals. And we transformed all of that.

House: All of them, yeah, yeah. And then what, basically, PCs caught up in terms of the power.

Coleman: Yeah, yeah, basically, you know, we were a heavy R&D high margin business. And the Intel/Microsoft, you know, basically took all the value out of that. And we just were the early to get hit. Everybody got hit over time. None of the hardware guys can really make money, as you know, today.

House: HPE sitting there struggling.

Coleman: But we would have, because we were such high margin and heavy R&D, it's an example of what got you there successfully <laughs>, and it just-- the right answer for the company would have been to go private sooner, and you could have made the flip, and create a whole different-- it was just the wrong business model. Along the way, we built the fastest computers, not because we were trying to build the fastest computers, but we needed the compute power to join the graphics. So we ended up with fast computers, and we ended up creating very good technology on the compute side. Really had this vision of parallel processing, and we fre-- you know, and we did two things early. Because Clark and Baskett were from Stanford, the idea of the MIP chip.

House: Yeah, well, you bought MIPS eventually.

Coleman: Yeah, because, you know, MIPS came out of Stanford with Hennessey, we were the first customer of the MIPS RISC chip. That was the relationship. Okay, and then we were their first customer, and then we got worried. We thought that was a competitive advantage. And we got worried that somebody else like Sun would buy MIPS, and so, "We better buy them." That's why we bought them.

House: Oh, okay, so it was a defensive move.

Coleman: It was a defensive move. We didn't necessarily want to be in that business, we just wanted to access that chip.

House: Didn't you buy Cray also?

Coleman: Yes, I'll come back to the Cray then. <laughter> So that was the MIPS acquisition decision. And MIPS at that point was three things, actually. They were a chip supplier, but they also were a workstation.

House: That's right, they did have a workstation.

Coleman: They had-- they owned that workstation. And they had an embedded processor business.

House: Oh, they did? I didn't know that. Okay.

Coleman: That became the MIPS that went public. The embedded processor business. We sold to Sun the workstation business, which ended up coming back to haunt us, because they took and built upon that capability.

House: Right.

Coleman: Okay? And then we sold off-- so we sold off the workstation business, and then we kept the microprocessor technology for ourselves, which was central to our strategy. But that was how all that happened. And then on Cray, that was probably the worst decision, I participated in making. They came to us-- we were kicking them in the marketplace, beating them badly in the high-compute world. And we were growing very rapidly, and they were declining. They came to us and said, "Would you guys consider buying us?" And we says, "No, we're beating you in the marketplace." And they kept coming back and kept lowering the price.

House: Okay.

Coleman: We thought that we were beating them in the marketplace, because we were just a better management team, knew more about what we were doing, and actually getting better. We bought them at what I learned-- what we learned was-- they were on the wrong price performance curve. It had nothing would be how smart we were, or how smart they were not, it was--

House: <laughs> There was nothing there!

Coleman: If you buy an asset on the wrong price performance curve, you can't--

House: There's no there there.

Coleman: There is no there there. That was a *really* important lesson I learned is if you're beating somebody in the marketplace, try to understand why you're beating them. Because I had-- I got assigned to sell that entity for half the price we'd bought it for three years earlier. It was a really bad decision.

House: Yeah, okay.

Coleman: And a bad asset for free is still a bad asset. You know?

House: Yeah, no question about that.

Coleman: And we just missed why we were winning in the marketplace.

House: So let me close with a couple of questions. Well, let me first of all ask, have I skipped some important things?

Coleman: I've given you my whole life.

House: Huh? So you got a--

Coleman: My professional life--

<overlapping conversation>

House: You've done a wonderful job, and I've just been engrossed in listening, because it's fabulous. But you were very clear in the public eye a couple years ago around the minority treatment issues. Which have only gotten exacerbated, it seems to me. And as I-- you know, you look at the stats on Google on Intel and HP and anybody today from a diversity standpoint, it's worse than it was 40 years ago in this Valley. And I think you've got some strong views on that and what could work on that. But it might be worth sharing.

Coleman: Well, the first thing is the stats aren't worse in the Valley. They are better. So there are more significantly more black professionals here.

House: But there's significantly more people, too.

Coleman: Significantly more people, but still, it is--

House: Okay, so don't kid yourself, it's better.

Coleman: It's better.

House: Okay, glad to hear that.

Coleman: And so that's one. The Valley perpetuated certain myths that one is this a meritocracy, and it's not. You know? Human beings aren't that way. <laughter> So that was just a myth. And it deluded itself

because it had-- because it had that belief, or convinced itself that that was true. And two is we had enough Asians and East Indians to say, "Well, we--," and most of them are, as you get bigger you're global, say, "We're diverse." They just happened to forget about Hispanics, blacks and women. <laughter>

House: Yeah, the ones we usually count in American statistics.

Coleman: Not only that, but that's, okay.

House: That's an important observation.

Coleman: I was talking to-- this was a few years ago, but I was talking to a CEO and I says, "How is your workforce?" and he says, "Great!" And this is the company that had like 500 people. And I said, "How many black people you have?" "One." <laughs>

House: One.

Coleman: One. Because he had lots of Indian and Asians and so diverse. And so it was a-- so I think we here in the Valley have deluded our self on diversity, and we're looking at it differently than other parts of the country. So that's-- the next thing is that the press, I think, in general, hadn't taken the Valley as seriously as it does today. Because certain things that you'd see leaders out here do that the East Coast and Midwestern leaders just knew better. Like when the CEO of Twitter said he couldn't find a woman Director, qualified?

House: Oh, it was that, yeah.

Coleman: I mean, you c-- some company CEO on the rest of the country would ne-- of a Fortune 500 kind of company, never even say that. And so we were less sensitive here. Because we thought we had no problem.

House: And some of these are kids. I mean, they're younger.

Coleman: Right, right.

House: You get to be a CEO earlier.

Coleman: And so we just-- we had deluded our self it wasn't a problem, and we didn't pay attention.

House: Okay.

Coleman: Okay. And so we're-- so in reality, it's kind of weird, right? Because we had younger people, etcetera, but we had deluded our self that it wasn't a problem. So nobody paid attention to it. And then the last thing is is this risk thing I talked about earlier. Two students out of Stanford decide to start a company.

House: Okay.

Coleman: Okay.

House: The red and blue.

Coleman: The red and blue. So, "I want to hire more Stanford students. Or maybe some MIT students might be good enough, or Harvard students." So I end up with this bias of what risk looks like in hiring people. And so I just na-- if I don't think of it, if I'm not conscious of it, I have a higher bar the more different you are.

House: Okay.

Coleman: And that's why I believe strongly, you have to confront that. It is natural for human beings to be unconsciously biased. That is a natural state of human being, because I'm trying in life reduce risk. So I have to be conscious about that, if in fact, I want to have diverse workforce, and have to believe that that will make a difference positively. Now that's diversity. The thing that I'm additionally focused-- we should be focused on today, in addition to diversity, is inclusion. So what is the difference? There's a story that I think you may have heard, many people have heard, about the elephant and the giraffe. And the story is the giraffes created a building. They designed it for themselves. So the windows were tall, and the hallways were narrow. One day the elephants come along, and it's raining terribly, bad weather, climate change, and the giraffe says, "Would you like to come in out from the weather?" And the elephants look at each other says, "Of course! Yeah, thank you!" So they come into the building and they become friends and it's working really well. Then finally the elephants say to the giraffe, "Can we lower the windows a little bit? You know, it's really hard to see out of these windows." And then they say, "Can we consider out how to widen the hallways?" Okay. And the giraffe says, "Well, why don't you lose weight? And there are these trainers will help train your neck," okay? And the point here is obvious, if you're going to create inclusive, you've got to be willing to adjust your culture so it all works. If you just demand that everybody--

that you hire change to be just like what you were before, that doesn't make sense. That's just not the way things will work. So what I say is--

House: I like that story. I hadn't heard it.

Coleman: Yeah, what I say, what I believe is you have to confront unconscious bias, don't be naïve about it. You have to be purposeful about that. And then the last thing, you know, you have this word quotas, right? That people talk about a lot of time. And but think about the way we manage companies. The way we manage companies, everything that matters, that really matters has an objective, a goal and a timetable.

House: Right.

Coleman: Right? Everything. So everybody knows if it doesn't, it's not that important. So if you say, "I'm committed to diversity," but there's no objective, goal, deliverable timetable, what is everybody in the company know? It's not that important. Now when you say that, people want to say, "Well, I don't want quotas." "No, I'm not talking about quotus. You don't have a quota for revenue attainment, or you don't have a quota for customer satisfaction. You have objective for customer satisfaction. So if you don't have objective for diversity, by definition, to the enterprise, it's not important." Because when there's an objective on the board, and people keeping score, everybody takes it seriously, because they know obviously it's important for the enterprise. And so I say to companies, "Quit using this use of no quotas, but you got to have objectives like you do anything else that you think is important in your company."

House: So on the boards you're on do you get this point across?

Coleman: Yeah, every day. <laughs>

House: Has it worked?

Coleman: Yeah! Well, my best example is Pinterest. Pinterest was the first company to not only-- it publishes its numbers like every-- like a number of people do today-- but we publish the objectives, all right?

House: There you go, okay.

Coleman: And how we do this, so it's public. So we have nowhere to hide. Because we believe that, again, if you're serious about it, you will have an objective.

House: I love it.

Coleman: One of my companies, the engineering team was complaining how hard it was to do this diversity thing. And I says, "We do hard. What are you talking about hard? That's what we do in Silicon Valley!" <laughter>

House: Yeah, absolutely!

Coleman: "We embrace difficult challenges! None of us would be in this Valley doing this stuff if we were scared of hard, right?"

House: Yeah, I love it.

Coleman: Yeah. So we do hard. So yeah, diversity's hard.

House: You have done hard, I must say! <laughter> What a spectacular career! And what a great interview! I just-- I have to thank you so much for taking time to do this.

Coleman: Great! I've enjoyed it!

House: And I appreciate it.

Coleman: I think what you're doing is important, as important.

House: Well, I think these stories matter for people. And as we move downstream, they matter more. And if we don't capture them now while we're still sentient, you know, we don't have them. And I just wish I'd gotten to Roy a little sooner.

Coleman: Yeah, one of the things, can I make a comment about--

House: You may.

Coleman: Kramlich? Because you're going to be talking to Dick. I think Dick represents the finest of venture capital in several ways. He doesn't think he's smarter than the entrepreneur. You know, he

understands that the en-- management teams build companies, not VCs. Okay, and so-- and he's a gentleman, you know? In other words, he did his work by being a gentleman, not being, you know--

House: I've heard that.

Coleman: Yeah, so he's a true gentleman, very helpful, very thoughtful, and he was supportive of management. Too often, people, I think, in the venture world become a distraction to management. You know, building a company, as you know, is really hard!

House: Oh, yeah!

Coleman: And you've-- and I think if you're going to be an investor or a board member, you don't want to create extra work for the guys trying to build the company, c because it's hard.

House: Well, it's just like your point about, you know, your job is to lighten the load for the people under you, not to make it harder.

Coleman: Not to make it harder.

House: Yeah. Otherwise, you don't have a) the credibility, and b) you certainly won't have the support and motivation.

Coleman: Right, right.

House: So.

END OF THE INTERVIEW