

**FAMILY LATE SKATE IN ANACOSTIA PARK  
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**WASHINGTON, DC**

**Oral History Interview**

**with  
KURT ROLLINS  
by  
DAN KERR**

**ANACOSTIA PARK  
August 24, 2019**

## **FAMILY LATE SKATE IN ANACOSTIA PARK ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

NARRATOR: Kurt Rollins  
DATE: August 24, 2019  
INTERVIEWER: Dan Kerr  
PLACE: Anacostia Park

### **SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

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**Dan Kerr** 00:06

Alright, we're on. This is Dan Kerr. This is August 24th. We're at Anacostia Park at Late Skate. I'm interviewing ... who am I interview?

**Kurt Rollins** 00:18

Kurt. You can call me "Rollo" in DC, Washington DC. I was born and raised here. Coming out here to enjoy ourselves tonight. Taking in the weather. It's been too hot, you know. And just to enjoy some nice music, man. After a while it will be wintertime, you know. We got to take in what we can. I'm also out here promoting my clothing line. I'm out here meeting people. Glad to meet you... you said Dan, right? You've been out here all day, cuz I've been out here most of the day.  
[inaudible]

**Kurt Rollins** 01:03

It's a good place to be. Enjoy your family. Enjoy the park. Fish. It's funny, I've been here all my life and never been fishing. It's something I might want to try. I've been skating since I was a kid. Kalorama Road. Up at Northwest. And Seabrook Skating Rink. So I'm familiar with skating. I'm not skating tonight. Just taking it easy. But I am enjoying the festivities. Meeting new people and enjoying the small of the barbeque. It's just a great place.

**Dan Kerr** 01:45

You mind sharing with me one of your early memories of this place?

**Kurt Rollins** 01:49

Ah, it has to be "go go." Coming down here. Walking into this park. All this in here, setting up the stage. Sometimes there were good days and sometimes there

wasn't. Most of the times were good times. Everybody knew each other. So I can't really recall the band that it was. But it was a big deal to be able to come down here to the park just to "go go." [inaudible] It was fun. You meet the ladies. You get to hang out with the guys. That's where all this DC clothing comes from. Because you kinda had to represent your area where you're from. So when they came to "go go" they generally had area gear, like uptown would have certain gear. Southeast would have certain gear. Northeast and like that. There's a long proud heritage of just fun and enjoying life. It wasn't violent like it was back then. You had a couple of fistfights maybe, nothing major. [inaudible] I know you've been out here all day, so you're dedicated to whatever you're doing. So what's the name of the [inaudible]?

**Dan Kerr** 03:45

We're doing this through the Humanities Truck. So we'll put you on our YouTube channel.

**Kurt Rollins** 03:50

Is this the truck behind me?

**Dan Kerr** 03:52

Yes, that's the truck.

**Kurt Rollins** 03:56

And you just travel in the DC area?

**Dan Kerr** 03:59

Yeah, just in the DC area. We're trying to document people's history, the culture, all of that. We're trying to do some of that here right now. And you're the first one to tell me about this clothing, the clothing lines.

**Kurt Rollins** 04:21

That was a... DDP, a store over here on Pennsylvania Avenue in one of these shops. Pretty much if you wore their clothing people would know you were from Southeast. They had clothing lines OBO. They had Madness. If you wore Madness you're from uptown. It was just a proud time, you know. It was good for black entrepreneurs like myself to make a little honest money without resorting to other means. [inaudible] They shut a lot of clubs down. I kind of understand with the violence at times. But if you don't give young people a place to go they just ... [inaudible] He has the right to have his concerns, but long time residents here ... I

don't even think it would be DC without "go go". This is too big of a part of it. Not just a little scratch. It goes deep.

**Kurt Rollins** 06:20

If you were a young guy trying to find yourself and you didn't have any experience in the "go go" scene, then you pretty much had to wing it. [inaudible]

**Kurt Rollins** 06:37

I just remember all the nice things about DC now. I can't say the gentrification of it is a tad bit different. But is much needed. Because some of the areas had such blight it was just uncalled for. [inaudible] It was just a mess. Now that it has a better look, better presentation... so what if the population has become more one-sided. You want to live in a district to have to pay the housing prices people are asking for. If you can't afford that ... I feel for you, but there's other options. So people still can live in a district and enjoy a district and not feel like they lost their city.

**Kurt Rollins** 08:08

I'm just happy to be here. Happy to be out here on this nice night. It feels the cool weather for once.

**Dan Kerr** 08:18

Where would you like this place to be in five years from now?

**Kurt Rollins** 08:25

Just just the way it is. You don't need to add anything. You don't need to take anything away. [inaudible] I just hope they don't cut back.

**Dan Kerr** 08:55

Any last thoughts you'd like to leave us with?

**Kurt Rollins** 09:00

No, I just want to say you know, to give the story of DC out to people who don't know so they understand. The the "go go" scene has to be heard. But I will say the violence has to stop. Our city's beautiful [inaudible] but if you're aware how these things work. Around election time everything gets off kilter. I just hope we come together. Thanks for having me.

**Dan Kerr** 09:46

Thank you. I appreciate it.

