



## **The Heidelberg Project: A Detroit Story**

*Growing up in Detroit*

### **Sherry:**

We had two boys and two girls. She and I were best friends. My brothers, there's an age disparity between those two. We did all kinds of childhood things that little kids today don't even know anything about. Hopscotch, Jacks, jump rope. This was just everyday normal life. We had active parents. We had a very active extended family. We were very active as a family unit. So there was lots of love. There was lots of encouragement. There was lots of reasons to be active and to be motivated. And I think we both picked up on that.

### **Narrator:**

And their education was hugely important.

### **Jenene Whitfield:**

I attended a school and the third grade that was in was more of what we call the African American part of the community of the west side.

And my mother wasn't satisfied and so we moved to what was known as a more slightly affluent but low, moderate income area where perhaps the population was 85, 90% Caucasian in that neighbourhood and at that school.

And by the time, but say I am now in third grade, by the time I graduated it was 95% African American. So there was always this concept of white flight. There was always this long standing division of, you're over there, we're over here. Detroit continues to be one of the most segregated cities. But where I grew up I had more options. I had more chances. I had both parents in the house. I had both parents working. My father worked in the factory, my mother worked at the Post Office. But that was still a good living.

And although they didn't pay for me to go to school they made it possible for me to have the kinds of opportunities and resources around me that I knew how to navigate.