



Playback Your Story asks the community around Gallaudet University to reflect on and unite through their connections to community, narrative, and place. Sponsored by Van Alen Institute and the DC Office of Planning, John Johnson conducted interviews throughout the community. The interviews culminated in a final performance by John Johnson's theater troop, Playback Theatre on the Gallaudet Campus in 2016. The initiative weaves together the stories of locals, inspiring us to cross the street, interact with one another, and understand the roots of our community.

David Young: I'm David Young. I grew up in Ivy City Apartments. This was the first address that I learned, I think maybe in kindergarten, and it was 1060 Mount Olivet Road, Apartment 1, zip code 20002. Since we lived in apartment 1, as you came out of the steps, you walked down the steps, went to the right...come up the steps and then go to the left. As I was younger, now that I reflect, there was a sense of safety there, for me, because I was oblivious to a lot of things. I lived in Ivy City from 1987 until about 1994. During that time, with the things going on in DC, it wasn't really safe, but those four buildings was very, very safe because everyone knew who we were, I knew everyone else. We all knew our parents and everything. There was a playground, got the same ice cream man. They were the same things I saw all the time.

At the time I was very infatuated with cars. I can remember my neighbor had a white 1992 two-door Nissan 300ZX with the tube tops. The car was popped, the same specific spot. He worked for Bell Atlantic at the time. It was very formative years. I remember very clearly my teachers—it was just a sense of togetherness. The people who lived there. Ruth K. Webb was my first-ever school. It is so interesting because I paint a picture differently than what it is now.

I can remember, vividly remember, where we weren't supposed to go...In the back of Ivy City, there is Capitol Avenue. There was a guy who lived at the end between Capitol and Mount Olive, because Capitol is a one-way street coming toward Mount Olivet. There was a guy who had a Doberman Pinscher who lived in there. I can remember being scared of that dog and walking around the back, where at the time it was Dream Night Club. Now it's Love, or something like that. We would come out Capitol Avenue. I remember doing other dangerous things. Running across from Capitol Avenue to Corcoran Avenue, which is on the opposite side, the same side of Gallaudet. We always wanted to climb those fences ...This was second, third grade. I'm sure my mother didn't allow for me to do that, but we were out with everyone else. It was really good.

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*This interview has been condensed and edited for clarity