

X

Establishing Freedom, Inc., 1962-1966

Felix Payne, a club owner and Democratic leader who knew Jordan's father, died January 14, 1962. Payne founded and published the *Kansas City American* and in 1928 became an official of the Democratic National Convention held in Houston, Texas. He was co-owner of the Kansas City Giants in 1909 and city tennis champion in 1920. Working with R. A. Long, he and Bennie Moten put their fund raising squadron over the top in community contributions for the Liberty Memorial and was recognized for that achievement in a glittering event at the Hotel Baltimore. The Paynes and the Jordans shared a long family history. Leon Jordan became a member of the Beau Brummel Club, founded by Payne and his friends in the 1930's. The Jordans gave a steak dinner for Payne's son, Felix Payne Jr., and his wife in 1958. The son held a government position in Washington. Jacqui McAfee and Harold Holliday Jr., when they went to Howard University were told that as members of Freedom's youth group they could contact either Payne or Senator Tom Eagleton for help and support. The elder Felix Payne was a likely bridge figure in the mind of the younger Leon Jordan to his father.⁷²

On the national scene in the spring and summer of 1962, the Freedom Riders challenged patterns of deep seated segregation in travel throughout the South. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee had grown out of the Greensboro, North Carolina sit-ins and began organizing communities. SNCC was beginning to focus on registering black citizens to vote in many southern states and meeting violent white resistance as early as 1961. Meanwhile Jordan saw in Kansas City a parallel need for its black citizenry to free itself from the political

⁷² *The Call*, September 12, 1958, and January 26, 1962; Interview with Jacqui Moore, September 18, 2008.

dominance of the northend white bosses who had controlled the black community since his grandfather's time. He quietly began to lay the groundwork for organizing local black voters.

In March, 1962, Jordan publicly severed his relation with Tim Moran. The particular issue on which he chose to make the break concerned a plan for allotting seats in the city council. Jordan and Watkins favored having 12 separate district seats, a plan that favored more black representation on the council. Moran supported a division of six seats elected solely by districts and six at large. Jordan accused Moran of pulling away from him on this issue. Both Jordan and Watkins then resigned from the 14th Ward Democratic Club, Inc. Jordan also resigned his political job as deputy constable in the courtroom of Magistrate Stuart Blackburn. Both Jordan and Watkins went to the courthouse on Monday morning, March 26th and told Moran in person of their decision. Moran appeared surprised and shocked. He said he was sorry about the break with Jordan whom he had been grooming to take his place when he retired, although he had no intention of retiring in the near future. He had been ward leader since 1910 and had owned and operated the Green Duck for many years before selling it to Jordan.

Jordan and Watkins then issued the following public statement:

Effective this date we are announcing that all our connections and affiliations with organized political groups in this city have been severed.

For some time we have felt that in some small measure we may be able to contribute to the betterment of the Negroes' position in this community if we established a completely independent political organization. This, of course, will not be to the encouragement of those seeking personal gain or to gratify selfish interests or ambitions.

Operating within the framework of the Democratic party, we shall stimulate vitally needed political interest in the future. In the past, this program has been delayed—to say

the least. Our hopes are that our support will come from those who sincerely believe the Negro deserves first class citizenship and representation in all branches of our government.

With this in mind we are establishing a completely independent organization whose activities will extend to all Negro precincts of this city.

We need the help and suggestions of those who see the political position of



Charles Moore, Fred Curls, Leon Jordan, Bruce Watkins, Howard Maupin

the Negro in Kansas City as we see it and are willing to work for its betterment.

Jordan signed the statement as 14th Ward Committeeman and Watkins simply as a citizen. They indicated the headquarters of their organization would be set up in the old Carver Theater building across the street from the Green Duck.

In May there was another memorable organizational meeting in Howard Maupin's barber shop. Jordan and Watkins met with Leonard Hughes, Jr., Fred Curls, Dr. Charles Moore, Marion Foote, and Maupin. Leonard Hughes had come up with a name for the organization--Freedom, Inc. Jordan was named President and Watkins was named Chairman of the Board. Freedom's office was established at 2506 Prospect, next door to the Green Duck; the old Carver Theater continued to be the meeting place for larger activities.

On July 21st Freedom held a rally that served as a political coming out party at the Carver Theater, preceded by a Cadillac motorcade, with 21 county candidates included. Bruce Watkins gave the opening address and served as master of ceremonies. Freedom was described as “the brainchild of Leon Jordan.” Jordan gave the final talk, but in between Sheriff Arvid Owsley, Judge Kopp, Everett O’Neal, Richard Bolling, J. McKinley Neal and several others spoke. Jordan closed saying, “We are going to stick with our guns until we see victory,” and then added, “all candidates for office would get one Hell of a screening before we put out our list of endorsed candidates.”

Dovie Means was one of the black office holders Freedom targeted as controlled by the white factions. She fought back saying she was as racially minded as any member of Freedom. And relative to the advertisement, “Is Uncle Tom dead?” she said, “The only ‘Uncle Tom’ she had heard anything about prior to this primary fight was a man named Tom Pendergast, a deceased politician who used to protect Leon Jordan’s father in his operation of a saloon years ago at 18th and Vine. The same man was instrumental in Mr. Jordan being named a policeman, before he [Tom Pendergast] died.” This is a rare public reference to Leon’s father and his ties to Pendergast, and may help explain why Jordan did not talk about his father more than he did.

The Tuesday after the Freedom rally, Leon Jordan and Chester McAfee were sitting in front of Jordan’s package store next to the Green Duck when a police officer ordered the two and others standing nearby to move on. McAfee became indignant and insisted they didn’t have to move. The officer arrested Jordan and McAfee. Leonard Hughes represented the pair before Judge Lewis Clymer and the case was dismissed. But Hughes and his two defendants then went to the office of Police Chief Clarence Kelley and filed a complaint. The chief attributed the incident to an inexperienced officer. Jordan, however, made it clear he thought he was being

harassed for the recent formation of Freedom, Inc. This is an early indication of Jordan's belief that Chief Kelley was no friend of the black community. Jacqui McAfee Moore later gave this incident a more comic twist when she said that her father and Leon began a suit against the police department and that the proceeds of the suit were to pay her college tuition. She decided not to wait.

In August Jordan faced and defeated James A. Mason, heavily backed by Tim Moran, for the post of Democratic committeeman of the 14th ward by a vote of 1408 to 831. Rosemary Lowe, Freedom's candidate for committeewoman, however, lost to Dovie Means by a vote of 1241 to 992. Nevertheless, the *Call* announced that "Although he failed to win both Democratic county committee posts. . . , Jordan so roundly defeated Moran's candidate for county committeeman that Democrats all over the county courthouse now are recognizing Jordan as the new ward 'boss.'" ⁷³

In the flush of this beginning political success, Orchid's mother, Susan Maude Ramsey died, at the age of eighty-two at St. Margaret's Hospital in early October. In 1959 she had moved to Kansas City, Kansas, to live with her son, Harvey, and to be near her daughter, Orchid. She became an active member of the Quindaro Christian Church. ⁷⁴

The election of Bruce Watkins and Dr. Earl Thomas to the city council as Freedom candidates in 1963 was a historic and a signal victory for Freedom. Leading up to that election Dutton Brookfield, wealthy businessman and aspiring political leader, had split from the Citizen's Association claiming that it endorsed too many Democrats for key offices and hence was no longer non-partisan. He then formed the Independent Voters Association and became the opposition candidate for mayor to Ilus Davis, the Citizen's Association's choice. Freedom chose

⁷³ *The Call*, March 30, May 11, July 27, August 17, 1962; Interview with Jacqui Moore, Sept. 28, 2008.

⁷⁴ Clipping of *Dispatch*, October 12, 1962, Clay Center Museum, Clay Center, Kansas; Copy LJC.

to join forces with Brookfield's Independent Voters Association. The Citizen's Association which had won respect and power for its role in ridding Kansas City of Pendergast and his boss rule, won the mayoral race, but Watkins and Thomas, as IVA and Freedom candidates, won council seats. The Citizens Association, seeing Freedom as only another racial form of the boss politics they had opposed for decades, tried to crush it in its infancy. But the reforming white civic leaders who wrestled political power from Pendergast had never proven either very knowledgeable or responsive to the needs of the black community, and in this case they, at least initially, failed to reckon with the fact that the civil rights movement was giving Freedom a reason for being that made it markedly different from just another traditional political faction.⁷⁵

There is a significant footnote to Freedom's success. Harold Holliday was originally slated to be Freedom's candidate for 3rd district councilman, and Bruce Watkins was to be the candidate for councilman at-large. It was assumed that Watkins's previous associations with the Republican party and his family's prominence would bring him broad political support for the at-large post. However, when it became clear that he was not going to get some of the cross-party political endorsements he expected, the decision was made within Freedom, that Watkins would bump Holliday as candidate for councilman and Thomas would become the candidate for councilman at-large. Holliday, with his superior service in civil rights organizations, was not willing to accept that decision and then chose to run as a Citizen's Council candidate. Watkins' election was a bitter defeat for Holliday, but within months he had rejoined Freedom, and quickly again became one of its staunchest leaders. Fred Curls later remembered that shortly after the '63 elections, Jordan ordered, "We need Harold Holliday. Bring him back." Jordan

⁷⁵ *The Call*, April 5, 1963.

recognized the value of Holliday's dedication to civil rights and his acute legal talent. He was quickly brought back within Freedom's fold.⁷⁶

In June, 1963, the Jordans brought Leon's aunt Josephine, the last of the previous generation of his family, to a nursing home in Kansas City for her final days, just as Jordan's mother had taken his father to Topeka for the latter's final days. The woman who had been a second mother to him died in September. She had traveled and sang with Blind Boone and later gone to London to perform in music halls. She was baptized by the Bishop of London, who later became the Archbishop of Canterbury. She married John M. Wright, who had a long and distinguished career in Kansas politics. And in her own right she was named "Woman of the Year" in church and religion in 1960. She taught Sunday School, sang in the choir at St. Simon's, and lived to become the church's oldest living member. She was a member of the Oak Leaf Club, Ne Plus Ultra, Round Table Reading club, Council of Clubs, and Topeka Council of Churches, and was instrumental in forming the Carver YMCA. It was with heavy heart that Leon Jordan buried this woman who had become a second mother to him in Topeka.⁷⁷

On November 22, 1963, America's young prince of Camelot took an assassin's bullet to the head in Dallas. The nation stopped in introspective shock at the virulent strain of hatred and violence strung through its national politics. Vice President Lyndon Baines Johnson seized the moment to put his best self forward, dedicating his enormous political skills to enacting the agenda of John F. Kennedy. As a Southerner, and particularly as a Texan, he had enormous authority to promote and pass civil rights legislation. But the Civil Rights effort taking place on the ground in the South continued to be marked by violence and heroic protest.

⁷⁶ Interview with Fred Curls, July 29, 2004.

⁷⁷ *The Call*, September 20 & 27, 1963.

In Kansas City the issue of public accommodations took center stage the following spring in 1964. The city council passed an amendment extending a public accommodations ordinance passed in 1962 by a 11-2 vote. The local Tavern Owners association and a hastily formed organization identified as the Association for Freedom of Choice opposed the ordinance and successfully petitioned for a public referendum. By an impressive majority, white business, church, and political leaders, along with the major newspapers, supported the ordinance, and it was framed as a test case for Kansas City to prove its progress in race relations before the nation. President Johnson was at the same time continuing to build his consensus for a national Civil Rights act which included both voting rights and equal access to public accommodations.

Locally a campaign organization, People for Public Accommodations, was formed and chaired by three leading white citizens, William F. Barthelme, Robert Lyons, and Kenneth Aber. Mayor Ilus Davis actively supported the ordinance. The intense national drama taking place primarily in the South for civil rights had at last sensitized the leaders of the Citizens Association to their local responsibilities. Church leaders from all faiths joined their voices and active organizing efforts in support. Labor and educational leaders supported the ordinance. In the black community, Harold Holliday led the effort, but he was also charged with coordinating the efforts of all civic groups across racial lines. His wife, Margaret co-chaired with Mrs. Stephen Hadley the women's division of People for Public Accommodations.

On April 7th citizens came out to vote in surprising numbers, but the ordinance passed by a slim majority of only 1,743 votes despite the broad support of the city's white leadership. The energized vote in the black community proved decisive. It contributed more than half the total vote in favor of the ordinance. The *Kansas City Call* justly claimed, "an unprecedented voting

record for Negro Kansas Citizens.” On this issue Kansas City’s white leadership failed to reach very deeply into its own community.

The heaviest vote came from the 14th ward, Freedom’s home base. But very impressive votes also came from the 17th ward, Holliday’s home ward, the 3rd ward where Freedom was encroaching on the rule of Bernard Gnefkow, and the 2nd ward where the Rev. Kenneth Waterman operated independently of the tired and corrupt rule of Louis Wagner’s Jeffersonian Democratic Club. On April 17th the *Call* showed a photo of Leon Jordan, President of Freedom, Councilman Bruce Watkins, Ed Steward, regional representative of the Automotive Workers, AFL-CIO, and financial chairman of Operation Public Accommodations, and Lee Vertis Swinton, president of the NAACP, all at the black headquarters of Operation, P. A. at 2544 Prospect, next door to Jordan’s Green Duck Tavern. The caption under the photo opens, “VICTORY IS SWEET.”

It was an important victory for Freedom, Inc. and the community it represented. The community as a whole was clearly the winner, not any single politician. Nobody’s pockets were lined from this vote. But the black community’s opportunity and presence in the larger community became freer and richer. It brought home to the black community the value of organizing its political power. Freedom Inc. won respect as the public voice of the community and not just another political faction.⁷⁸

In June that year *The Call* published a warm memory that Jordan wrote in tribute to Chester A. Franklin. Jordan first met Franklin during Jordan’s “short-pants period” in Denver before Franklin founded *The Call* in 1919. Grandmother Jordan nicknamed Franklin “Big Chief” because of his erect stature and somewhat Indian characteristics. The name stuck.

⁷⁸ *Kansas City Call*, Apr. 3, 10, & 17, June 5, 1964; *Kansas City Times*, Apr. 7 & 8, 1964; *Kansas City Star*, Apr. 6 & 8, 1964; Thomas P. Murphy, *Metropolitics and the Urban Community*, p. 117.

Franklin's athletic ability particularly impressed the young Jordan, and since this was about the time he lost his own father, Franklin became a substitute father. Although Franklin was always busy, ambitious, and somewhat self-centered, he commanded attention. A special relation developed and Jordan makes clear he is writing this testimony as an act of love for "a most wonderful man, loyal and understanding as any young man would want."

Prior to the days of *The Call* Jordan sold papers for the *Kansas City Sun*, owned by Nelson Crews, "the golden orator of his time" and friendly political competitor to Jordan's father. After finishing college he worked in the Advertising Department of *The Call* under Earl Wilkins, the brother of Roy Wilkins who later became much better known as the leader of the national NAACP. In that position Jordan assisted Franklin dishing out the papers to the newsboys. Franklin's physical strength sent Jordan to bed early on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, and by Friday noon he was completely worn out.

When Jordan received his offer to head the Liberian police force, he discussed the matter with Franklin over a game of pinochle. He had been directed to fly to Liberia but had never been "higher off the ground than my old Ford would bounce after hitting a hole or rut in the streets. Well, I did not fly to Liberia but the results of this discussion with the Chief resulted in my losing all fear of aircraft and later developing into a flight instructor."

Jordan came particularly to admire Franklin's strong faith in himself during the period of his final devastating illness, when his athletic body could no longer do his bidding. The proud sprinter not only had to learn to walk, but first to crawl. He chose to fight his way back under his own power. Shortly before Franklin's death in May, 1955, and just after Jordan returned to Kansas City from Liberia, he and Jordan planned a trip to Africa. Jordan was to rig an open view seat in one of the flying trainer airships, so that they could "drag" many of the hinterland

villages for a close-up view and photos. Franklin didn't make it, but "He was so damn gallant that he made you want to cry and laugh and cling to him and carry him in your arms and lean on him for support all at the same time."⁷⁹

On July 2, Congress passed President Johnson's Civil Rights Act. The next day the Congress of Racial Equality opened its national convention in Kansas City. The barber shop of the Hotel Muehlebach was immediately tested and found carefully compliant. James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman were CORE volunteers training to register voters in Mississippi when they were brutally murdered on June 21, 1964. The nation followed the case of the missing men for weeks before their bodies were discovered. The mother of James Chaney came to the CORE convention in Kansas City and was interviewed in the lobby of the Muehlebach Hotel while CORE members lined the mezzanine looking down on the flood-lit interview. When the interview was over the hotel resounded with the spontaneous lyrics of *We Shall Overcome* ringing through the lobby. Freedom, Inc.'s battle for equal access to public accommodations and to realize the legitimate value of the black vote was seen as dramatically synchronized on the local as well as the national scene.⁸⁰

In the fall of 1964 Jordan defeated J. McKinley Neal as state representative in the 4th district, a post in state government he held until his death, and in which he was succeeded by his wife, Orchid, for many years afterwards. Harold Holliday joined Jordan in the House as a representative of the 14th district. But the earlier summer primary for that election also included a significant local political drama involving Representative Richard Bolling, who by then had become a national political figure.

⁷⁹ *The Call*, June 5, 1964.

⁸⁰ *Kansas City Times*, July 3 & 4, 1964; I witnessed the interview of Mrs. Chaney and the spontaneous singing of "We Shall Overcome."

Hunter Phillips, Western Judge of Jackson County, who notoriously said, “I’ve run with the support of the factions and I’ve run without it, and let me tell you I’d much rather run with them than against them,” spotted an opportunity to defeat Richard Bolling in the Democratic primary of 1964. Bolling was first elected to Congress in 1948 on something of a fluke. He bet heavily on President Truman’s coattails, against current political wisdom, and won. Once in Congress, with Truman’s support, he moved steadily up the leadership ladder particularly becoming a favorite of House Speaker Sam Rayburn. But he was not a pork barrel legislator and most observers believed him to be too liberal for his district. Bill Morris, a faction leader who became Jackson County Public Administrator in 1966, spoke for many when he said: “Bolling was arrogant as hell—never came around when in town and never took time to see you when you went to Washington. He was too liberal, always claimed he was a national politician with no time for constituents. He was forever giving us that Rules Committee bullshit.”

But in 1961 Bolling reached too far running for majority leader of the House. He was defeated by Carl Albert. When John McCormack succeeded Sam Rayburn as Speaker, Bolling lost more influence over internal House policy and strategy. Lyndon Johnson, after becoming President in 1963 was also not particularly friendly. Then at the end of 1963 Bolling announced he was getting a divorce from his wife, Barbara. Hunter Phillips saw an opportunity to run a low key campaign against Bolling in the primary and with the support of the factions defeat him as a Democratic candidate for the House of Representatives.

But Bolling rose to the challenge, rallied his national labor and civil rights supporters, and campaigned vigorously personally on the ground, particularly in the black community, and defeated Phillips in what was seen then as a very innovative political campaign. While Jordan did not share Bill Morris’s belief that Bolling was too liberal, he too apparently was put off by

Bolling's distancing himself from local political leaders. However, Clarence Mitchell, chief lobbyist for the NAACP, and an old friend of Jordan's, called and reminded Jordan that if a civil rights advocate like Bolling was defeated, the NAACP would lose considerable influence in Washington. Bolling headed a special 22 man civil rights steering committee set up by the influential Democratic Study Group. Jordan agreed to support Bolling, but told Mitchell, "This doesn't mean I got to like the son of a bitch." The voting power of Freedom was now beginning to be recognized nationally and Jordan clearly understood and accepted Freedom's national responsibilities.⁸¹

Just before the November elections the Freedom Inc. Youth Council, now led by Thomas Neely, gave a surprise dinner at the Natonians Club to honor Mr. and Mrs. Jordan and Mr. and Mrs. Fred Curls, their sponsors who had been "so nice." Among the thirty-five people present, the Hollidays were also specially invited.

Richard C. Tolbert graduated from Central High School in 1964 and joined the Freedom Youth Council. Jordan noted his exceptional abilities. He was headed to Yale University and Jordan arranged a summer research internship for him at the Institute for Community Studies. He later arranged for him to be a government service trainee in the Budget and Systems Department of the city manager's office and an administrative assistant in the Jackson County Department of Administration. Tolbert was allowed to live in rooms above the Green Duck. Tolbert often acknowledged that Jordan became the father he wished he had. And Jordan in turn clearly saw in Tolbert a potential leader of the community.

He strongly encouraged him not only to complete his BA and MA degrees at Yale, but to finish the doctoral dissertation that Tolbert never did complete. He once told him, "I want you to

⁸¹ *Kansas City Call*, Sept. 27, 1963 and Nov. 6, 1964; Steven Glorioso, *Fight Against the Factions*, pp. 1-40; *K.C. Jones*, Sept. 1990; Box 32, Folder 9, Richard W. Bolling Collection, UMKC Miller Nichols Library, Special Collections.

go back to Yale and don't come back until you finish your Ph. D. There are too many niggers with Master's degrees working in the post office." He introduced Tolbert to political leaders throughout the state and in 1968 he arranged for Tolbert to attend the national Democratic convention in Jordan's position. The trust and faith Jordan put in Tolbert was exceptional, but not unique. Many members of the Youth Council remember with some sense of wonder the responsible assignments Jordan gave them. The concern for young people that he had shown as a police officer carried over to his career as a political leader. He believed Freedom's future depended on the young, and it was Freedom's responsibility to create possibilities for the young.⁸²

On May 18, 1965, Representative Leon Jordan had a confrontation with Representative Frank Mazucca in Jefferson City that on the surface seemed like a minor incident, but below its surface there were deep issues of ethnic and political conflict which would make the confrontation memorable in the black community and the northend for years. At a meeting of the house municipal corporations committee, chaired by Mazucca, Jordan had charged that there was discrimination in the handling of promotions of Negro officers in the Kansas City Police Department. Chief Kelley, several other top police officers, including Major Cliff Warren, and several police board members were present. Mazucca called Major Warren to testify. Warren testified that there may have been discrimination in the past, but he didn't believe it existed under Chief Kelley. Mazucca also called another Negro sergeant to testify.

⁸² *The Call*, November 6, 1964; Interview with Richard Tolbert, June 25, 20007.

After the session Mazucca saw Warren in the hall and engaged him in a conversation. Jordan emerged from the house chamber and joined the conversation. He was clearly angry over Mazucca putting the two Negro police officers on the spot in the presence of Chief Kelley and his fellow officers. “If they told the truth their commanding officers would be unhappy and if they didn’t the Negroes in Kansas City would know they were not telling the truth,” he later explained from his office. During the conversation with Mazucca Jordan’s anger got the



best of him. There were differing accounts of the shoving and pushing that followed. But clearly at one point the sixty-one year old Jordan threw a punch at the fifty-nine year old Mazucca. Mazucca claimed Jordan’s fist connected with the lower part of his jaw, but it was a grazing punch that did no serious physical damage.

Jordan quickly acknowledged that both men were too old for fisticuffs. He later walked into Mazucca’s office and said, “I was a bit out of line and emotionally disturbed. I want to extend my apologies.” Mazucca replied, “You know I never have discriminated against your people and I never will. Just don’t try to cut me up here or cut me up in Kansas City.” But afterwards Mazucca said, “I can’t work with a man like that. He’s liable to blow up again.”

The county court was already at work on the redrawing of district lines in Jackson County. Mazucca took the county court’s plan and presented it to the 20-member House apportionment committee. Harold L. Fridkin, Jackson County counselor, who was instructed by

western judge Morris Dubiner to start redrawing the district lines had arrived in Jefferson City the evening before. Louis Wagner, an assistant Jackson County counselor, and notorious faction leader, assisted Fridkin on the details of the reapportionment.

On the strictly police department issue, Jordan had also brought up in the hearing the recent retirement of Alvin Brooks, who after eleven or twelve years of service had achieved no higher rank than corporal. After retiring from the department, Brooks became active in Kansas City CORE, and soon became its Chairman. He then went on to a distinguished career of public service as Executive Secretary of the Human Relations Commission, a member of the Kansas City Council, Mayor Pro-Tem, and missed being elected Mayor of Kansas City by only a narrow vote margin. Jordan could not foresee the distinguished career Brooks was to achieve, but he had been partner to Cliff Warren for many years on the police force and understood very well the spot Mazucca had put Warren on.

But clearly also at issue below the surface was the contest between the power of the northend politicians and Freedom's effort to make the black community independent of their control. When Jordan was murdered five years later no one was ever convicted of the crime. But by far the most pervasive belief in the black community was that he was the victim of political retribution. The second investigation into Jordan's murder conducted in 2010 suggested strongly that there was considerable basis for this popular belief.⁸³

The immediate FBI investigation into Jordan's death looked into the women in Jordan's life and revealed another story that came to a climax shortly after Jordan's confrontation with Mazucca. In December, 1965, Marian Foote resigned from Freedom, hounded by rumors that she had been having an affair with Leon Jordan over the last several years. She had known Jordan since 1957 when she began visiting the Green Duck on "25 cent nights." She was

⁸³*Kansas City Call*, May 21, 1965; *Kansas City Times*, May 19, 1965.

involved with politics and worked with the Elwood faction. She and Jordan discussed politics. She became pregnant and was fired from the Elwood faction. Jordan hired her to work in the liquor store, but she vehemently denied that Jordan fathered her baby. She was involved in the early organization of Freedom. Even after she began working in the County Investigator's office, she worked part-time at the Green Duck. Then Orchid called her and told her she had heard that Foote and Jordan were having an affair. Orchid warned her to "stay off of 26th and Prospect and out of Mr. Jordan's car." Her only reply was to ask Mrs. Jordan not to call her at work. Orchid Jordan later confirmed Foote's account of the phone call.

Foote then took the matter to Bruce Watkins, consistently insisting that the rumors of the affair were false. Watkins, according to her, called her back a short time later and said "that things had been straightened out." The rumors, however, did not stop. Jordan then called a meeting of Freedom's staff and informed them that "his private and professional lives were separate and he did not appreciate people trying to break up his home with their rumors." Still the rumors didn't stop, and Foote decided to resign from Freedom in December, 1965.

Two years later Foote and her boyfriend, Vernon Wright, began operating a restaurant at 39th and Indiana. They ran into financial difficulty. Jordan cosigned a loan for them at the Kaw Valley State Bank. When Wright was unable to make the last few payments on the loan, Jordan paid them, but Foote claimed Wright eventually repaid Jordan. In 1968 Foote ran for state representative, but did not get Freedom's support. Her relations with Freedom had understandably cooled, and after Jordan's death she said she had not talked with him for a long time.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Interview with Marian Foote by Patrolwoman H. Winston, July 29, 1970; Interview with Orchid Jordan by Jefferson Smith, Jr. and George F. Lueckenhoff, August 7, 1970, FBI file, LJC.