

Arc of Justice

Synopses

Logline:

Arc of Justice traces the remarkable journey of New Communities, Inc. and the struggle for racial justice and economic empowerment among African Americans in southwest Georgia.

Short:

Arc of Justice traces the inspiring journey of New Communities and the struggle for racial and economic justice among African Americans in southwest Georgia. Formed in 1969 during the Civil Rights movement, New Communities persevered as the largest black-owned farm in the country despite relentless opposition.

Medium:

Arc of Justice traces the inspiring journey of New Communities Inc. and the struggle for racial and economic justice among African Americans in southwest Georgia. Formed in 1969 during the Civil Rights movement, New Communities persevered as the largest black-owned farm in the country despite relentless opposition. It lost its land in 1985 due to discriminatory lending practices by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, but then prevailed in an historic lawsuit and staked its claim to new land and a new beginning in 2009.

Long:

Arc of Justice traces the remarkable journey of New Communities, Inc. and the struggle for racial justice and economic empowerment among African Americans in southwest Georgia.

NCI was created in 1969 in Albany, Georgia by leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, including Congressman John Lewis, and Charles and Shirley Sherrod, to help secure economic independence for African American families. For 15 years, NCI cooperatively farmed nearly 6,000 acres, the largest tract of land in the United States owned by African Americans at the time, but racist opposition prevented them from implementing plans to build 500 affordable homes as part of their community land trust.

Unable to secure government loans to cope with the impact of successive years of drought, NCI lost the land to foreclosure in 1985. But 25 years later it was given new life as a result of a successful and little-known class action lawsuit brought by

hundreds of African American farmers against the U.S. Department of Agriculture for loan discrimination. With the settlement, the original founders purchased a 1,600-acre plantation once owned by the largest slave owner and richest man in Georgia. NCI is now growing pecans and using the antebellum mansion on the property as a retreat and training center, still committed to its original mission of promoting racial justice and economic development.