



70<sup>th</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY

# Separate ≠ Equal

Commemorating the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*  
May 17, 1954 – May 17, 2024





# How does a court case from 1954 affect your life today?

Way back in 1954, as Hank Aaron began his baseball career, the term rock 'n' roll was invented, Elvis Presley recorded his first songs and J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* was published, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down a ruling that deeply affected the lives of families throughout the country.

In *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kan.*, the Court overturned a decision from 1896 that allowed school districts to segregate students by race. The 1896 case (*Plessy v. Ferguson*) determined that school districts could legally force Black students to attend separate schools, as long as they provided an "equal" education.

The 1954 Court, led by Chief Justice Earl Warren, unanimously found that "separate is inherently unequal," noting that children attending all-Black schools were not provided the same opportunities or level of education as children in all-white schools.

This landmark decision began a long, hard-fought nationwide battle toward school integration, forcing school districts in communities large and small, urban and rural, rich and poor, to rethink entrenched beliefs about racial equality. The national drama of school integration also played out throughout Florida - with many courtroom battles and citizen protests continuing well into the 21st century.

In fact, many of today's students could get a first-hand account of the struggle just by asking their parents and grandparents



September 8, 1959, Jan and Irene Glover, ages 9 and 7, walk with their mother, Irvana Prymus, to Orchard Villa School in Liberty City, Fla. In 1959, Miami-Dade County schools admitted the first group of African Americans to Orchard Villa Elementary School, which had been all white. Orchard Villa and Air Base Elementary were the first public grade schools in Florida to be desegregated. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory.

for their recollections of school integration, busing, protests and other significant events.

As the nation commemorates the 70th anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*, Florida Press Educational Services and the Tampa Bay Times Newspaper in Education program, in partnership with Florida Humanities and Community Tampa Bay, explore the timeline of events leading up to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and the effects it has had on our society.



Students and instructor at a segregated high school in 1954. Times (1954).

## THINK ABOUT IT

The *Brown v. Board of Education* case of 70 years ago still reverberates in our schools today. A recent study by the LeRoy Collins Institute, Florida State University, concludes that while Florida has become much more diverse over time, the schools have become more segregated. The percentage of intensely segregated schools (those with 90-100 percent non-white students) doubled over the past two decades to 20 percent of the schools in the state.

Similarly, double segregation - segregation by both race and poverty - is increasing in Florida.

"Florida is the third-largest state in the country and has the most diverse student body in our state's history, yet one-fifth of our public schools are intensely segregated," writes Dr. Carol Weissert, Florida State University political science professor and LCI director. "Similar segregation is evident for low-income students. All Floridians deserve equal access to a quality education, regardless of race or economic standing."

“

*Desegregation laws were a catalyst for the civil rights movement. A lot of the things that occurred in the civil rights arena are because of Brown v. Board of Education. [I want to] pay homage to Oliver Brown and his daughter Linda ... It changed the landscape of America in terms of people learning to get along with each other.*

*Bobby Bowden, Hillsborough County*

## BROWN V. BOARD of EDUCATION: Steps along the road to integration of schools in the United States

A timeline of significant events in Florida and around the nation

✦ 1849

The Massachusetts Supreme Court rules that segregated schools are permissible under the state's constitution (*Roberts v. City of Boston*). The U.S. Supreme Court will later use this case to support the "separate but equal" doctrine.

✦ 1857

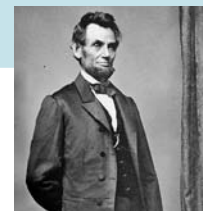
In *Dred Scott, Plaintiff in Error v. John F. A. Sanford*, the Supreme Court rules that Black people, enslaved or free, could not be citizens of the United States.

✦ 1861

The Civil War begins.

✦ 1863

President Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing enslaved people in Southern states. Because the Civil War is ongoing, the Proclamation has little practical effect.



President Abraham Lincoln poses for a portrait in this undated file photo. AP.

✦ 1865

The Civil War ends; the Thirteenth Amendment is enacted to abolish slavery. The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands is established by an act of Congress. Its main mission is to provide relief and help freedmen become self-sufficient in all areas of life. The first Black schools are set up under the direction of the Freedmen's Bureau.

# A watershed moment

*Brown v. Board of Education* was a watershed moment for American civil rights law. The U.S. Supreme Court held that "Jim Crow" laws that segregated public school students based on race were unconstitutional, in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause. This decision overturned the court's prior decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, where it had held that segregated public facilities were constitutional, provided they were separate but substantially equal. This event was the culmination of the NAACP's (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) Legal Defense Fund's campaign against segregation in schools. In addition, the case moved beyond the children and was also a fight for fair wages for Black teachers, staff and administrators, better facilities and equal budgets. Despite this landmark decision, desegregation of public schools was often met with delays or outright opposition.

Source: Library of Congress



# A milestone decision

In 1950, young Linda Brown walked with her father, the Rev. Oliver Brown, to Sumner Elementary School near her home in Topeka, Kan. Linda and other Black children were refused admission to all-white schools and were required to continue attending an all-Black school much farther away from their homes. The school board's refusal to admit the students triggered more than three years of litigation that ultimately resulted in the now-famous *Brown v. Board of Education* decision on May 17, 1954. Brown was the lead plaintiff.

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren delivered the unanimous ruling in the landmark civil rights case. State-sanctioned segregation of public schools was a violation of the 14th Amendment and was therefore unconstitutional. This historic decision marked the end of the "separate but equal" precedent set by the Supreme Court nearly 60 years earlier in *Plessy v. Ferguson* and served as a spark for the expanding civil rights movement during the 1950s and 1960s.

Arguments were to be heard during the next term to determine just how the ruling would be imposed. More than one year later, on

May 31, 1955, Warren read the Court's unanimous decision, now referred to as *Brown II*, instructing the states to begin desegregation plans "with all deliberate speed."

Despite two unanimous decisions and careful, yet vague, wording, there was considerable resistance to the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*. In addition to segregationists were some constitutional scholars who felt that the decision went against legal tradition by relying heavily on data supplied by social scientists rather than precedent or established law. Supporters of judicial restraint believed the Court had overstepped its constitutional powers by essentially writing new law.

However, minority groups and members of the civil rights movement were buoyed by the *Brown* decision even without specific directions for implementation. Proponents of judicial activism believed the Supreme Court had appropriately used its position to adapt the basis of the Constitution to address new problems in new times. The Warren Court stayed this course for the next 15 years, deciding cases that significantly affected not



Linda Brown Smith, 9, is shown in this 1952 photo. Smith was a 3rd grader when her father started a class-action suit in 1951, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kan.* AP.

only race relations, but also the administration of criminal justice, the operation of the political process, and the separation of church and state.

Source: National Archives

## GOING BEYOND THE TEXT Newspaper audit

People can be discriminated against for many reasons, but if you are not the target of that discrimination, you might not even notice it. For the next two weeks, conduct an audit of how your local newspaper presents people of various races, ethnicities, body shapes, income levels, religions, disabilities, sexual orientations and genders. (To audit something means you should inspect it closely and look for any discrepancies). Assign categories for different groups to track (for example: have one group study how often women are quoted versus men, another can look at how many people with disabilities are pictured, etc.) Be sure to count how many positive and negative stories and images you find about the group you are tracking. Create an infographic based on what you have learned, and share the information with your class.

Standards: SS.8.A.1.1; SS.912.A.1.3; SS.912.CG.2.1; ELA.912.EE.1.1; ELA.912.EE.2.1; ELA.912.EE.3.1; ELA.912.EE.4.1; ELA.912.EE.5.1; ELA.912.EE.6.1; ELA.912.F.2.1; ELA.912.F.2.4; ELA.912.C.1.2; ELA.912.C.1.3; ELA.912.C.2.1; ELA.912.C.3.1; ELA.912.C.4.1; ELA.912.R.2.1; ELA.912.R.2.2; ELA.912.R.2.3; ELA.912.R.2.4

### 1866

The Civil Rights Act of 1866 guarantees Black people basic economic rights to contract, sue and own property.

### 1868

The 14th Amendment is ratified, guaranteeing "equal protection under the law," citizenship is extended to Black Americans.

### 1873

The *Slaughterhouse Cases* narrowly define Federal power and weaken the power of the 14th Amendment by asserting that most of the rights of citizens are under state control. As a result, pro-segregation states would come to justify their policies and claim that segregation in their public school systems is a states' rights issue.

### 1875

In March, Congress passes the Civil Rights Act of 1875, prohibiting discrimination in inns, theaters and other places of public accommodation. It is the last federal civil rights act passed until 1957.

### 1883

The Supreme Court overturns the Civil Rights Act of 1875, and declared that the 14th Amendment does not prohibit discrimination by private individuals or businesses. This paved the way for segregation in public education.



“

Many students were shuffled from school to school, outside of their neighborhood, so even then, the pros and cons were evident, especially to us students. It was a huge deal back then to share a classroom with Black kids.”

Juliana Menke, Pinellas County



The historic Glover School in the Bealsville Community south of Plant City. Bealsville's historic Glover School was built in 1873 by freed slaves who'd settled in Bealsville. It was first called Jamison School and started off as a two-room structure that served kids in first to fifth grades. Over time, it expanded into five buildings. This school building was built around 1933. But in 1980, 10 years after weathering desegregation, Glover closed permanently. Times (2010).

# The Road to Brown

Although the Declaration of Independence stated that "All men are created equal," due to the institution of slavery, this statement was not to be grounded in law in the United States until after the Civil War.

In 1865, the 13th Amendment was ratified and finally put an end to slavery. Moreover, the 14th Amendment (1868) strengthened the legal rights of newly freed enslaved people by stating, among other things, that no state shall deprive anyone of either "due process of law" or of the "equal protection of the law." Finally, the 15th Amendment (1870) further strengthened the legal rights of formerly enslaved people by prohibiting states from



Members of the seventh- and eighth-grade classes from the Dade City Colored School in 1932. The Dade City Colored School was founded in 1889 and later became Moore Academy, Moore Elementary School and Mickens High School. Courtesy of Martha Lewis. Times (2007).

denying anyone the right to vote due to race.

Despite these Amendments, Blacks were often treated differently than white people in many parts of the country, especially in the South. In fact, many state legislatures enacted laws that led to the legally mandated segregation of the races. In other words, the laws of many states decreed that Blacks and whites could not use the same public facilities, ride the same buses, attend the same schools, etc. These laws came to be known as "Jim Crow" laws. Although many people felt

that these laws were unjust, it was not until the 1890s that they were directly challenged in court.

Sources: United States Courts; Library of Congress

## THINK ABOUT IT

With few laws protecting the treatment of these newly freed people, several states developed policies, dubbed the Black Codes, or Jim Crow laws, to prevent even an appearance of equality for non-whites. Blacks couldn't testify in or serve on a jury for cases regarding a white person. They couldn't quit their job or lease their farm as a white man could. They had to pass a test or pay a hefty tax to vote. Vagrancy became a crime, but only if you weren't white. Anyone who violated any of these laws could be sent to prison.

Source: National Parks Service

✦ 1887

The practices of comprehensive racial segregation known as Jim Crow laws emerge, and racial separation becomes entrenched. Florida is the first state to enact a statute requiring segregation in places of public accommodation. Eight other states followed Florida's lead by 1892.

✦ 1896

The U.S. Supreme Court authorizes segregation in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, finding Louisiana's "separate but equal" law constitutional. The ruling provides legal justification for Jim Crow laws in Southern states.

✦ 1899

In *Cumming v. Board of Education of Richmond County, State of Georgia*, the U.S. Supreme Court upholds a local school board's decision to close a free public Black school due to fiscal constraints, despite the fact that the district continued to operate two free public white schools.



Mary McLeod Bethune with a line of girls from the Daytona Normal and Industrial School for Negro Girls, which she founded in 1904. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory.

✦ 1909

W.E.B. DuBois, Ida Wells-Barnett, Mary White Ovington and others found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Their mission is to eliminate lynching, and to fight racial and social injustice, primarily through legal action. Florida has the highest per capita rate of lynching from 1900-1930. The NAACP becomes the primary tool for the legal attack on segregation, eventually trying the *Brown v. Board of Education* case.

# Plessy v. Ferguson — 1896

In 1890, Louisiana enacted what's commonly called the Separate Car Act, requiring that all passenger trains in the state would have separate cars "that were equal in facilities" for white people and people of color. A group called the Citizen's Committee of New Orleans challenged the act in 1892 by sending one of its members, Homer Plessy, to sit in a white car, refuse to leave and be arrested under the law. In response, the group filed a lawsuit.

Plessy, contending that the Louisiana law separating Blacks from whites on trains violated the "equal protection clause" of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, decided to fight his arrest in court. By 1896, his case had made it all the way to the United States Supreme Court.

The U.S. Supreme Court, however, ruled against Plessy in a 7-1 decision. Justice Henry Billings Brown delivered the court's opinion, stating that so long as the facilities provided equal accommodations: "We cannot say that a law which authorizes or even requires the separation of the two races in public conveyances is unreasonable."

As a result of the *Plessy* decision, in the early twentieth century the Supreme Court continued to uphold the legality of Jim Crow laws and other forms of racial discrimination. The U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in this case instituted the doctrine of Separate but Equal, which became the law of the land.

Sources: National Park Service; United States Courts



*White parents began pushing on the buses carrying Black students to school causing the buses to rock. What I thought were normal parents became an angry, violent mob threatening students like me whose only 'crime' was being forced to leave their school and come to mine. Such hatred without any cause."*

*Beverly Ledbetter, Duval County*

## GOING BEYOND THE TEXT

### A racial caste system

"Jim Crow" was the name of the racial caste system that operated primarily, but not exclusively, in southern and border states between 1877 and the mid-1960s," according to the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia. With your class, examine and unpack the 14th Amendment and discuss the impact of the Amendment on citizenship and guaranteed freedoms for Black people. Then explore the consequences of the 14th Amendment and the creation of Jim Crow laws. Next, review the key facts of the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case and determine your ruling on the case. Students will compare their ruling on the case and the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling. Discuss this with your peers and write down what you have learned and your thoughts about it in journal or blog form.

Standards: SS.912.A.2.4; SS.912.A.2.5 SS.912.CG.2.1; SS.912.CG.3.11; SS.912.A.7.8; SS.912.A.1.2; ELA.912.EE.1.1; ELA.912.EE.2.1; ELA.912.EE.3.1; ELA.912.EE.4.1; ELA.912.EE.5.1; ELA.912.EE.6.1; ELA.912.F.2.1; ELA.912.F.2.4; ELA.912.C.1.2; ELA.912.C.1.3; ELA.912.C.2.1; ELA.912.C.3.1; ELA.912.C.4.1; ELA.912.R.2.1; ELA.912.R.2.2; ELA.912.R.2.3; ELA.912.R.2.4

# Enter the NAACP

In response to the Springfield Race Riot of 1908 and seeing a need for a nationwide coordinated effort for racial equality, a diverse group of individuals including writer Ida B. Wells, historian W.E.B. DuBois, suffragist Mary White Ovington, and sociologist Henry Moskowitz founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

This group would go on to confront the issue of Separate but Equal through a series of carefully selected lawsuits. By the time the group had a formal plan to target inequality, however, the NAACP couldn't afford to follow it until the late 1930s due to the Great Depression.

In the 1940s, word spread across Florida that racial changes were on the horizon. The NAACP in Florida started a campaign called the "Double V": victory against racism overseas and against racism at home. After World War II ended, Florida lawmakers created the Minimum Foundations Program for public schools. The program was designed to strengthen the education system in Florida and upgrade Black schools so that the federal courts would not accuse Florida of having an unfair, unequal public education system.

Source: University of South Florida: Exploring Florida: A Social Studies Resource for Students and Teachers



Desegregated students boarding school buses at W.T. Moore Elementary School in Tallahassee. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory.

### **Murray v. Pearson — 1936:**

Maryland courts ruled that sending Black law students out of state, rather than admitting them to white universities, could not prepare them for a career in Maryland.

### **Gaines v. Canada — 1938:**


The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that each state must provide equal opportunities, not just offer to pay students to attend out-of-state schools.


### **Sweatt v. Painter — 1950:**


The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that experiences, opportunities and prestige all impact education. Things that can't be touched or held can still have value.


### **Brown v. Board of Education — 1954:**


Each of the following cases were represented by the NAACP and eventually reached the U.S. Supreme Court. Many of the lower courts ordered "equalization" of schools.

 **Briggs v. Elliott — 1949:** Black parents in Clarendon County, S.C., had asked the county to provide buses for their children, as they had for the white students. When they were ignored, they filed a lawsuit challenging segregation itself.

 **Bolling v. Sharpe — 1950:** The Consolidated Parents Group, Inc. tried to enroll 11 Black students an all-white school in 1950. The students were denied based on race, and the parents filed a lawsuit.

 **Davis v. Prince Edward County — 1951:** In 1951, Barbara Rose Johns organized a student strike to speak out against terrible conditions in her school in Farmville, Va. More than 450 students participated and more than 150 filed a lawsuit. They demanded the state segregation law be struck down.

 **Belton (Bulah) v. Gebhart — 1951:** In one case, parents tried to enroll their Black children in white schools to avoid poor conditions. In the second case, transportation to school was an issue. When they were denied, the parents filed lawsuits.

 **Brown v. Board of Education — 1951:** The NAACP recruited 13 Black families in Topeka, Kan., to try to enroll their children in white schools. When they were denied, they filed a lawsuit.

Learn more about these landmark court cases at [nps.gov/brvb/learn/historyculture/fivecases.htm](https://nps.gov/brvb/learn/historyculture/fivecases.htm) and [uscourts.gov/educational-resources/educational-activities/history-brown-v-board-education-re-enactment](https://uscourts.gov/educational-resources/educational-activities/history-brown-v-board-education-re-enactment).

Source: National Parks Service

### **1927**

The Supreme Court finds that states possess the right to define a Chinese student as non-white for the purpose of segregating public schools. (*Gong Lum v. Rice*)

The National Conference for Christians and Jews (now known as Community Tampa Bay) is founded. It is a human relations organization dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry and racism in America.

### **1935**

Assisted by his protégé Thurgood Marshall, Charles Hamilton Houston of the NAACP begins his strategy of challenging segregation in graduate and professional schools.

### **1938**

In *State of Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada*, the Supreme Court decides in favor of Lloyd Gaines, a Black student who had been refused admission to the University of Missouri Law School. This case sets a precedent for other states to attempt to "equalize" Black school facilities, rather than integrate them.

### **1939**

The first issue of the St. Petersburg Times "Negro News Page" appears on October 22. The page carries articles about Black church and school activities, sporting and social events, births, deaths, weddings and other personal news. Written exclusively by Black reporters working out of their homes, the section is inserted only in papers distributed in Black neighborhoods.



# A tale of two systems

On the surface, the story of *Brown v. Board of Education* is a story of children denied the right to equal education. It is a story of Black children forced to walk long distances to reach segregated schools. It is a story of Black children not having the same opportunities as white children. It is a story of Black children not being permitted to read the same books as white children.

"When you look at *Brown*, you are looking at a moment so powerful it is the equivalent of the Big Bang in our solar system," says historian and commentator Juan Williams. "It led to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. It led to sit-ins and bus rides and freedom marches. And even today, as we argue about affirmative action in colleges and graduate schools, the power of *Brown* continues to stir the nation."

Source: Learning for Justice

## A unanimous decision

On May 17, 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously struck down the separate but equal doctrine in American public schools. The 11-page decision, written by Chief Justice Earl Warren, was clear: "We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."

The public reaction was mixed.

Newspaper editorials both praised and condemned the decision. Opposition was fierce. Livelihoods and lives were lost. People on both sides of the fence were ostracized. The history of this landmark decision has resulted in a series of gains and losses. And the fight for equality continues today.

Source: Learning for Justice



Black schoolchildren on a bus in in Dale County, Fla. (1937). State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory.

## Separate is not equal

The History Channel defines segregation as the "physical separation of categories of individuals, usually on the basis of gender, race, religion or class." Segregation can be the result of tradition, custom or law. Although various forms of segregation have been a part of American history, the term usually focuses on the pattern of behavior that has affected Black people.

From the 1820s through the 1840s, white-initiated segregation became popular in public places, such as schools, parks, theaters and beaches. During this time period,

Black people often lost jobs to white people. There were severe limits put upon Blacks regarding voting. Although segregation was common practice, many white people favored even stricter policies of total exclusion.

The post-Civil War government passed the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments, and various civil rights acts, "which abolished slavery, made Blacks citizens with equal rights before the law and prohibited racial discrimination in voting. Yet the new Republican-controlled Reconstruction governments generally sought to replace the old publicly supported policy of exclusion with one of separate but equal access."

Source: The History Channel



Discrimination is defined as the unfair treatment of a person, racial group or minority based on prejudice. Decades of not treating people with equality and respect spawned the civil rights movement. The Civil War ended in 1865. Yet it took Black Americans many decades and a long, difficult fight to get what Abraham Lincoln had intended them to have: equality.

As early as 1904, Florida's Black residents were working to improve their lives. Segregation resulted in poor education for Black children, and as a result, Black people began creating their own schools. In Florida, Mary McLeod Bethune opened the Daytona Literacy and Industrial Training School for Negro Girls.

Source: University of South Florida. Exploring Florida: A Social Studies Resource for Students and Teachers

ABOVE: George E.C. Hayes, left, Thurgood Marshall, center, and James M. Nabrit pose outside the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., May 17, 1954. The three lawyers led the fight for abolition of segregation in public schools before the Supreme Court, which ruled today that segregation is unconstitutional. AP.

## 1947

In a precursor to the *Brown* case, a federal appeals court strikes down segregated schooling for Mexican American and white students (*Westminster School Dist. v. Mendez*). The verdict prompts California Gov. Earl Warren to repeal a state law calling for segregation of Native American and Asian American students.

## 1948

The "Negro News Page" of the St. Petersburg Times moves from weekly to daily publication.



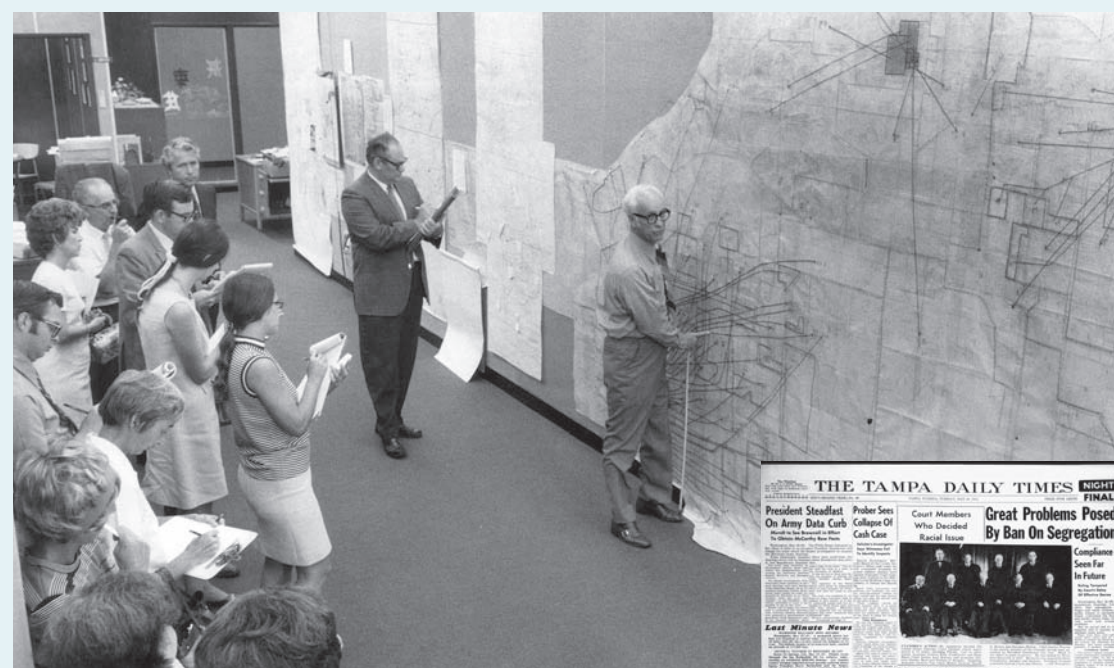
## 1949

*Briggs v. Elliott* becomes one of the cases consolidated by the Supreme Court into *Brown v. Board of Education*.

## 1950

In *Sweatt v. Painter*, the Supreme Court holds that the University of Texas Law School must admit a Black student, Heman Sweatt. The Supreme Court rules that Texas failed to provide separate but equal education, prefiguring the future opinion in *Brown* that "separate but equal is inherently unequal."





NAACP Freedom Bus and riders (1961). State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory.

"Spaghetti" desegregation plans explained to reporters by Pinellas County Schools Asst. Superintendent Joseph Gibson. Times (1971).

## Integration

In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously decided in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kan.* that school segregation was unconstitutional. The effects of this ruling went far beyond just the schools. Protestors began challenging legal segregation in buses, stores, theaters, beaches and other public places.

The Dade County school system was the first in Florida to break the color line when it integrated one school,

Orchard Villa Elementary School, in September 1959.

In 1962, Pinellas County took the first steps toward integrating schools. On August 30, 1962, the St. Petersburg Times reported that three Black students were attending St. Petersburg Junior College and Tomlinson Adult Education Center. This first step in desegregation received little media coverage. Until 1958, Black people in Pinellas and Manatee counties had no local place to receive a higher education. Gibbs Junior College

opened that year with an anticipated enrollment of 100, but actual enrollment was more than 500 students. The year 1962 also marked the first desegregation of Pinellas County public schools.

Source: Digital Commons University of South Florida

## THINK ABOUT IT

The *Brown* decision called for school desegregation to happen with "all deliberate speed." How quickly, and how fully, have schools desegregated? Widespread racial desegregation of Florida's public schools was finally achieved in the fall of 1970, but only after the Supreme Court set a firm deadline and Governor Claude Kirk's motion to stay the Court's desegregation order was rejected.

Sources: Journal of Florida Studies; Leroy Collins Institute

### 1951

On February 28, *Brown v. Board of Education* is filed in Federal district court in Kansas.

Linda Smith, the former Linda Brown, stands in front of the Sumner School in Topeka, Kan., on May 8, 1964. AP.



### 1952

The U.S. Supreme Court hears oral arguments in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kan.* Thurgood Marshall, who will later become the first Black justice on the Supreme Court, is the lead counsel for the Black school children in Topeka.

### 1954

In a unanimous opinion, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education* overturns *Plessy* and declares that separate schools are "inherently unequal." The Court delays deciding on how to implement the decision and asks for another round of arguments.

## GOING BEYOND THE TEXT

# Freedom Riders

Black people struggled for decades to win legal equality. Segregation was deep-rooted in the South. Schools, public transportation and many public places were segregated. Lawsuits to challenge segregation in schools took place from the 1930s through the 1954 landmark decision of *Brown v. Board of Education*. Ending segregation was not easy.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott, 1955-56, and the Tallahassee Bus Boycott, 1956-57, are directly related to the overturning of *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Sit-ins challenged segregation at lunch counters starting in 1960. During the summer of 1961, with the civil rights movement well underway, activists challenged yet another segregation stronghold: interstate bus travel.

Most Black Americans did not try to assert their rights because of the likelihood of violence. However, in 1961, a group of Black and white Freedom Riders challenged segregation on interstate buses and in terminals. As a result, these citizens challenged federal officials to enforce U.S. law. The Freedom Rides became a defining part of the civil rights movement, and the Freedom Riders became models of the heroism that transformed race relations.

Research the Freedom Riders, specifically in Florida, in your school media center or local library. Examine not only the history of this heroic group of people, but also the concept of nonviolent protest. In addition, research the difference between a bystander and an upstander. The Florida Memory Project is a good place to start, as well as your newspaper's archives and the Library of Congress.

Write a fully developed essay focused on your research. Share your research with your class. Now that you have learned about the journey of the Freedom Riders, look in the newspaper for an example of a citizen who is standing up for his or her rights. Summarize the information in the article and find a sentence in the article that best describes this person or his or her challenge. Share your thoughts with your class.

Standards: SS.912.A.5.7; SS.912.CG.4.1; SS.912.CG.3.1; SS.912.A.3.12; SS.912.A.7.7; SS.912.A.1.2; SS.912.H.1.6; ELA.912.EE.1.1; ELA.912.EE.2.1; ELA.912.EE.3.1; ELA.912.EE.4.1; ELA.912.EE.5.1; ELA.912.EE.6.1; ELA.912.F.2.1; ELA.912.F.2.4; ELA.912.C.1.2; ELA.912.C.1.3; ELA.912.C.2.1; ELA.912.C.3.1; ELA.912.C.4.1; ELA.912.R.2.1; ELA.912.R.2.2; ELA.912.R.2.3; ELA.912.R.2.4



# Florida char



## Mary Jane McLeod Bethune

The daughter of formerly enslaved parents, Mary Jane McLeod Bethune became one of the most important Black educators, civil and women's rights leaders and government officials of the 20th century.

In 1904, Bethune opened a boarding school, the Daytona Beach Literary and Industrial School for Training Negro Girls. Eventually, Bethune's school became a college, merging with the all-male Cookman Institute to form Bethune-Cookman College in 1929. A champion of racial and gender equality, Bethune founded many organizations and led voter registration drives after women gained the vote in 1920. In 1924, she was elected president of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, and in 1935, she became the founding president of the National Council of Negro Women.

A friend of Eleanor Roosevelt, in 1936, Bethune became the highest ranking Black woman in government when President Franklin Roosevelt named her director of Negro Affairs of the National Youth Administration. In 1940, she became vice president of the NAACP. Appointed by President Harry S. Truman, Bethune was the only woman of color at the founding conference of the United Nations in 1945. Additionally, Bethune was a businesswoman who co-owned a Daytona, Florida, resort and co-founded the Central Life Insurance Company of Tampa.



## LeRoy Collins

LeRoy Collins was governor of Florida from 1955 to 1960 and was the first leader of a southern state to voice support for desegregation and civil rights. A native of Tallahassee, Collins was first elected to public office in 1934 as Leon County's representative in the state legislature. Collins served in the state House of Representatives and the state Senate until 1942, when he resigned to serve in the U.S. Navy during World War II. In 1946, he was reelected to the state Senate and served until 1954, when he was elected governor.

During his years as governor, Collins emphasized education and worked to strengthen the state's public school system from the primary grades through the university system. He created the first community colleges in the state and promoted industry, agriculture, and tourism through state sponsorship. Among his most important accomplishments was the moderate course he took to deal with the racial unrest of the 1950s and early 1960s.

Collins went on to become the first director of the Community Relations Service under the 1964 Civil Rights Act. While serving in this capacity he went to Montgomery, Ala., in 1965 and negotiated a peaceful conclusion to a national civil rights march led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

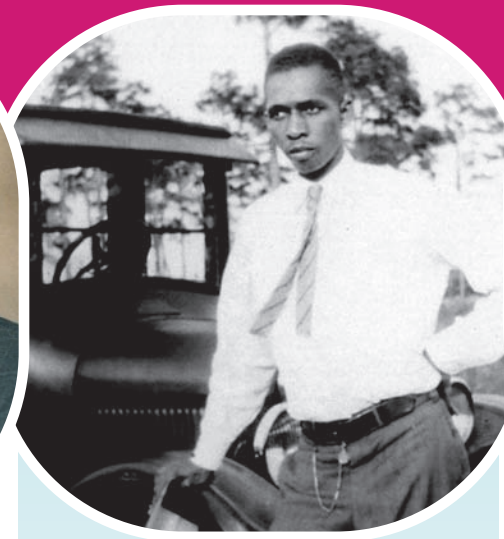


## Reverend A. Leon Lowry

Known for his deep voice and gentle but powerful presence, the Rev. A. Leon Lowry became pastor of Beulah Baptist Institutional Church in Tampa in 1956. He was president of the Florida NAACP and led the campaign to desegregate public facilities in Tampa in the 1960s. Lowry's civil rights roots went back as far as his days of teaching theology at Morehouse College in the 1940s. Among his students was Martin Luther King Jr.

In the 1960s, Lowry led peaceful protests at several Tampa lunch counters and helped found Tampa's first biracial bank.

With his ability to reach out to people of all races, ages and classes, Lowry seemed like the answer to the Hillsborough County School Board's problems with busing and race relations in the 1970s. He was elected to the board in 1976 and served four terms over 16 years. In 1987, Lowry was given the Florida Bar Foundation's Medal of Honor for easing racial tensions and promoting social justice in Tampa.



## Harry T. Moore

Educator and civil rights activist Harry Tyson Moore was one of the earliest leaders to be assassinated during the modern phase of the civil rights movement. Moore was a leader in voter registration efforts and worked as a statewide organizer for the NAACP in Florida, concentrating on establishing branches in rural areas.

He began his career teaching in the public school system in Brevard County, first in an elementary school and later as principal of Mims Elementary School. He and his wife, Harriette, who also taught school, joined the NAACP in 1933. The following year, Moore started the Brevard County NAACP. In 1937, in conjunction with the all-Black Florida State Teacher's Association, and backed by the NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall in New York, Moore filed the first lawsuit in the Deep South to equalize Black and white teacher salaries.

In 1941, Moore organized the Florida State Conference of the NAACP, and soon became its unpaid executive secretary. In 1951, the Moores died when the Ku Klux Klan exploded a bomb in their home.

### ◆ 1955

The issue of implementation is handled in what has come to be known as *Brown II*, an order on May 31 directing the lower federal courts to require desegregation "with all deliberate speed." Original language, "at the earliest practicable date," is removed in the hope of easing the South's expected resistance. "Deliberate speed" sets no deadlines, leaving responsibility in the hands of local school officials.

### ◆ 1956

Pinellas County School Superintendent Floyd T. Christian defends the county's rigid segregation as "sound principle," asserting that Pinellas schools are "separate, but really equal."

### ◆ 1957

More than 1,000 paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division and a federalized Arkansas National Guard protect nine Black students integrating Central High School in Little Rock, Ark.

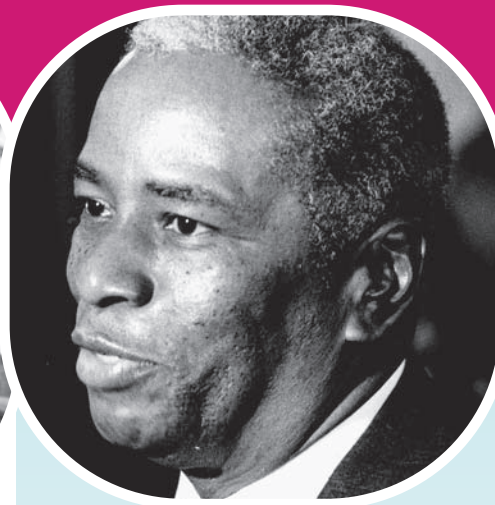
### ◆ 1958

On June 18, a federal court orders the University of Florida to allow qualified Blacks to enroll in its graduate schools. Black George H. Starke will enroll in the university's law school the following semester.

Four Black parents, unable to get their children into Tampa-area white schools, take the school district to court in *Manning v. the School Board of Hillsborough County*. Among the lawyers for the plaintiffs is future U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall.



# ngemakers



## James B. Sanderlin

Despite the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court ruling outlawing “separate but equal” schools, Pinellas County Schools built nine additional all-Black schools between 1954 and 1963. As the result of a class-action suit filed by attorney James Sanderlin on behalf of five Black families, a U.S. District Court ruled in January 1965 that Pinellas County Schools must submit a plan to desegregate schools. The district submitted an initial plan two months later. However, comprehensive desegregation did not occur until 1971, when Pinellas County became the first system in Florida to approve a voluntary, all-inclusive desegregation plan.

Before he was elected Pinellas’ first Black judge in 1972, Sanderlin fought civil rights battles as a young lawyer. He sued the Pinellas School Board on behalf of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, charging that separate was not equal, and forced the district to desegregate.

He sued the city of St. Petersburg for not paying a promised wage increase to its sanitation workers, who were almost all Black. He also sued the city’s Police Department, forcing it to integrate more than a dozen police zones.



## Robert Saunders, Sr.

Robert W. Saunders, Sr. was born on June 9, 1921, in West Tampa. He attended Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona Beach and after military service completed a BA degree at the Detroit Institute of Technology before entering the University of Detroit Law School. In January of 1952, he suspended his legal studies to accept a position as Florida field director for the NAACP after Harry T. Moore was killed.

Saunders guided the state through challenging years of change, including landmark legal decisions on voting rights, school desegregation, the integration of public beaches, facilities, and housing, equal pay for Black teachers, and many other milestones.

In 1966, he left his position with the NAACP to work with his friend Roy Wilkins at the U.S. Office of Equal Opportunity, serving for a decade as the chief of civil rights for the southeast region. He returned to Tampa in 1976 and directed the Office of Equal Opportunity for the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners until his retirement in 1988. From that time until his death on March 18, 2003, he remained an active and outspoken community leader.



## Virgil Hawkins

Virgil Hawkins applied for admission to the University of Florida law school in 1949. He was denied admission solely because of his race.

While the Florida Supreme Court rejected Hawkins’ case in 1952, *Brown v. Board of Education* changed the landscape. Just one week after the *Brown* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court vacated Florida’s ruling against Hawkins. On October 19, 1955, the Florida Supreme Court ruled that Florida’s public schools, including colleges, had to align with federal law.

The Florida decision allowed a transition period, or gradual implementation of the new mandate. Hawkins was still on the outside looking in, but he struck a bargain. He agreed to withdraw his application in exchange for a court order that ultimately desegregated Florida’s public universities. Hawkins eventually obtained his law degree from what is now the New England School of Law in 1965 and became a member of The Florida Bar in 1976.

Sources: Florida Atlantic University; Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame; Florida Department of State; Florida Governor’s Office; Florida Memory Project; Library of Congress; National Women’s History Museum; Pinellas County Schools; Public Broadcasting System; Tampa Bay Times; Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library. Photos credit Tampa Bay History Center; Times.

## GOING BEYOND THE TEXT Leadership in the news

The goal of an activist is to bring about political or social change. Throughout this Newspaper in Education publication, you are reading about many activists who are great examples of ordinary citizens, who stood up for their beliefs. Some of the activists who are responsible for the modern civil rights movement include the people on these pages as well as Charles Hamilton Houston, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Claudette Colvin, Rosa Parks, Stokely Carmichael, Fannie Lou Hamer, A. Philip Randolph, Malcolm X, Justice Thurgood Marshall, Mamie Till Mobley, Diane Nash, Coretta Scott King, John Lewis, and Medgar Evers. Research one of these activists and create a Power Point or Prezi presentation to share with your class. Be sure to document your sources. Next, look through your local newspaper for an example of a citizen who is standing up for his or her rights. Using one of your slides, explain how this person can be compared to the activist you researched. Share your presentation with your class.

Standards: SS.912.AA.4.9; SS.912.A.7.6; SS.912.A.7.17; SS.912.A.1.2; SS.912.A.1.2; SS.912.AA.3.2; ELA.912.EE.1.1; ELA.912.EE.2.1; ELA.912.EE.3.1; ELA.912.EE.4.1; ELA.912.EE.5.1; ELA.912.EE.6.1; ELA.912.F.2.1; ELA.912.F.2.4; ELA.912.C.1.2; ELA.912.C.1.3; ELA.912.C.2.1; ELA.912.C.3.1; ELA.912.C.4.1; ELA.912.R.2.1; ELA.912.R.2.2; ELA.912.R.2.3; ELA.912.R.2.4



### ✦ 1959

The Dade County school system is the first in Florida to break the color line when it integrates one school in September: Orchard Villa Elementary School.

### ✦ 1960

In New Orleans, federal marshals shield 6-year-old Ruby Bridges from an angry crowd as she attempts to enroll in school.

### ✦ 1961

The first school desegregation in Pinellas County occurs when Black students are admitted to St. Petersburg Junior College.

The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. comes to Tampa on Nov. 20 to speak at the Fort Homer Hesterly Armory and to help the Florida NAACP raise money badly needed to pursue voter registration, school desegregation and other civil rights work. The Ku Klux Klan threatens to bomb the armory.

Thurgood Marshall, center, chief legal counsel of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, is surrounded by students and their escort from Little Rock, Ark., as he sits on the steps of the Supreme Court Building in Washington on Aug. 22, 1958, after he filed an appeal in the integration case of Little Rock’s Central High School. AP



# HENRY WASHINGTON

## “Shake”

**B**orn and raised in Tampa, Florida, Henry “Shake” Washington began his education at Meacham Elementary School, continued through Booker T. Washington Junior High School, and graduated from the original Middleton High School in 1968.

Middleton High School and Blake High School, two of the predominantly Black schools in Hillsborough County, both closed in 1971 because of required integration. Washington would later become the first principal at the re-opened Middleton High School in 2002.

Washington notes that it was important to the community to re-open Middleton and Blake because closing the two schools was stressful on the community. “When we moved our kids out, where we kids went to school together, they got involved with things they probably should not have gotten into. Because you have got to remember, they removed them out of their environment and put them in another environment, which was quite stressful.” Not only did young people lose their schools, but they also lost the places where they would hang out and play sports.

Washington says that as a student at Middleton High School, he played football and basketball and ran track. During that time, the students received hand-me-down uniforms from the students at Hillsborough High School. The white students at Hillsborough High School “got new equipment, and we never did,” he says.

Washington recalls the books also were

used and in poor condition. “You could have old raggedy math books, but it didn’t make any difference. We would be in our own world, and we enjoyed what we were doing. We were educated.”

Black high schools could only compete against other Black schools in athletics, band competitions and all other school activities.

“We had to go to Atlanta and play teams, or Atlanta came here,” Washington says. “We had to go down to Miami. We had to travel all over the state because we had to play other teams to get to have games. We did a lot of travel and sometimes we would go for a whole week and wouldn’t be in school. We had a Black league then. We couldn’t be in the same conference as the white schools were.

“That changed my senior year: 1968. My senior year was the first year of integration



In April of 1971, following desegregation, students at Blake High School in Tampa asked Gov. Reubin Askew to save their school from being phased out. *Times* (1971).



Hillsborough County School Board Member Henry “Shake” Washington, District 5, during a special meeting of the school board at the Hillsborough County School Board auditorium. DIRK SHADD | *Times* (2021)

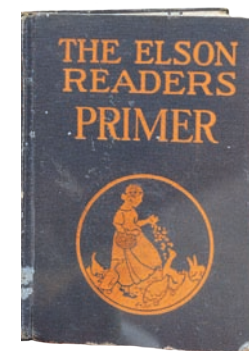
in athletics. Students from Middleton were rezoned to other schools in the county. Washington recalls there were riots at the high schools because of forced integration.

“White people were not used to being, being with Blacks, and Black were not used to being with whites. Problems came in ... When they closed the (high) schools, Blacks were really hurt because they closed down our school, and moved us from point A to point B.” Washington notes the Black students did not want to go to rival schools.

“It was quite an adventure back then. I can remember when you couldn’t drink out of the white water fountains. I remember when you had to ride on the back of the bus ... When you used to get on the bus, you pay up front and then you walk out and go in the (back) door.” For sports games, the Black students had their own bus.

Everything changed for Washington when he went to college and then was drafted into the Army. In the military, there was no segregation. “It was my first integrated experience,” Washington says.

Washington notes it is important to learn



A hand-me-down book used by Black students in Clearwater, published in 1917 and used until the 1950s. *Times* (2004).

about history because “you can’t move forward until you know where you come from. And coming from where I came from, I could see progress.

“I think respect is the greatest; the greatest gift a person can have is to know

how to respect people. I came up from a substitute teacher all the way up to the area superintendent. But I always respected people and people respected me. And that’s one of the keys that I think is important. If you don’t respect a person, then you have no value for them.”

### ✦ 1962

A federal court finds Hillsborough County is operating an illegally segregated public school system.

### ✦ 1963

Two Black students, Vivian Malone and James A. Hood, successfully register at the University of Alabama despite George Wallace’s “stand in the schoolhouse door” — but only after President Kennedy federalizes the Alabama National Guard.

On Sept. 15, 1963, a blast of dynamite rips through the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala. Four Black girls attending Sunday school are killed. The next morning the Atlanta Constitution carries an angry yet eloquent column by Eugene Patterson, the editor of the editorial page. It begins: “A Negro mother wept in the street Sunday morning in front of a Baptist Church in Birmingham. In her hand she held a shoe, one shoe, from the foot of her dead child. We hold that shoe with her. Every one of us in the white South holds that small shoe in his hand.” Patterson ended his Pulitzer-prize winning career as chairman and CEO of the St. Petersburg Times.



President Lyndon B. Johnson hands Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. a Civil Rights Bill pen at the signing of Civil Rights Bill in 1964. *Times* (1964).



A resident of Brandon, Fla., since 1982, Juanita Cook was born and raised in Tallahassee. One of eight children, Cook was around 11 years old when the decision was handed down in *Brown v. Board of Education*. She attended Griffin Elementary School, Griffin Junior High School and then the original Lincoln High School.

Built in 1869, the original Lincoln High School closed in 1967 when integration laws were passed in Florida. The building now serves as a library, community center and has a small museum on the building's history. Although integration became federal law in 1954, it wasn't until the late 1960s

# JUANITA COOK

and early 1970s that Florida counties started closing Black schools to require integration. According to Florida Trend magazine, when Florida revised its constitution in 1968, it required school districts to be drawn along county lines.

"I never went to an integrated school," Cook says. Cook graduated high school in 1963, then attended Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU). Living at home and working on the college campuses of FAMU and the University of Florida (UF) allowed Cook to be able to attend college.

One of four Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in Florida—the others are Edward Waters University, Bethune-Cookman University and Florida Memorial University—FAMU was the closest college to Cook's home.

While she attended classes, she was a switchboard operator, also known as a "maid." "We had a grey uniform, and we had a white cap," Cook recalls. "We looked like maids but we were switchboard operators. During the summer, they



Lincoln High School students. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory.



Lincoln High School. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory.

let us work full-time with the custodians."

Cook also joined the U.S. Army Reserve Unit while she was in college. She was one of four Black women to be in the Military Police Unit. She lived in the barracks with 20 other women. She notes it was the first time some of the women had been close to Black people. She remembers them asking a lot of questions and learning about false stereotypes.

"Segregation was alive in Tallahassee," Cook says.

When Cook attended FAMU, the college students were participating in boycotts and sit-ins. Although Cook's brothers participated in the boycotts, she did not, following her father's wishes since he could not afford to bail her out of jail.

Cook notes the history of Lincoln High School was destroyed, even though Leon County opened a new Lincoln High School, which was integrated in the 1970s. "They kept nothing from our school. Our colors were blue and white, the mascot was a tiger. They changed that. That was the hurtful part about it that they took away our schools."

In 1971, the only Black hospital in Tallahassee, on the FAMU campus, closed. Cook recalls the hospital was shut down when students went home for a holiday break. "They didn't tear it down, it just was no longer a working hospital. They closed it because of integration, so instead of two hospitals, they had one."

Cook recalls being aware that the separate schools for white and Black children were not funded equally. She notes, "We had one white high school – Leon High School. We got books from the white school that the students had written their names in ... most of the books, the condition

was poor. Some of the pages might be missing.

"Even in our labs – chemistry lab, biology lab – we didn't have the equipment that we needed. But from all of that from our Black school, Lincoln, we got doctors, we got teachers, lawyers, military officers just in my class alone. So, even though we had poor facilities, we produced because we were more focused on education than the kids (who) have everything now."

Cook says, "It looked like it was a sad time when I was going through all of that stuff, but I am happy that I am able to talk about it and not have any hate or anything about what happened or what people did or said.

"Racism is still alive. In some places you might not see it, but it's still alive. I think the more education we get on it, the more we interact with each other, the more we deal with each other, the better we are. We have to intentionally do things (that are) going to make people feel comfortable in dealing with each other."



## GOING BEYOND THE TEXT

# Human rights

The second bullet point of the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations is "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small."

Think about what these words mean in connection to the second sentence of the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Analyze political, economic and social concerns that emerged at the end of the 20th century and into the 21st century. What significance do these words have in connection with those concerns? How do human rights factor into these concerns?

Analyze the newspaper for a week and look at the current event stories on a local, national and international level. Review the role of the United States as a participant in the global economy (trade agreements, international competition, impact on American labor, environmental concerns). What do these issues have to do with human rights? Write a blog or journal post about this. Write your thoughts with your class.

Standards: SS.912.A.1.6; SS.912.A.7.12; SS.912.A.1.2; SS.912.A.1.2; ELA.912.EE.1.1; ELA.912.EE.2.1; ELA.912.EE.3.1; ELA.912.EE.4.1; ELA.912.EE.5.1; ELA.912.EE.6.1; ELA.912.F.2.1; ELA.912.F.2.4; ELA.912.C.1.2; ELA.912.C.1.3; ELA.912.C.2.1; ELA.912.C.3.1; ELA.912.C.4.1; ELA.912.R.2.1; ELA.912.R.2.2; ELA.912.R.2.3; ELA.912.R.2.4

### 1964

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is adopted. Title IV of the Act authorizes the federal government to file school desegregation cases. Title VI of the Act prohibits discrimination in programs and activities, including schools, receiving federal financial assistance.

Several Black parents and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund file suit against the Pinellas School Board, asking the U.S. District Court to end the county's policy of segregated education. Only 200 of the county's 10,200 students attend desegregated schools.



### 1967

The St. Petersburg Times discontinues the "Negro News Page" and integrates news about Black people into the overall newspaper.

On Oct. 2, 1967, Thurgood Marshall was sworn in as an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. He was the first Black justice appointed to the nation's highest court. Times (1967).

### 1968

The U.S. Supreme Court orders states to dismantle segregated school systems "root and branch." The Court identifies five factors – facilities, staff, faculty, extracurricular activities and transportation – to be used to gauge a school system's compliance with the mandate of *Brown*. (*Green v. County School Board of New Kent County*)



# CHLOE CONEY

Chloe Coney, Chief Executive Officer of Community Enterprise Group, LLC, was in the eighth grade when President John F. Kennedy came to Tampa, Fla., in November 1963. She remembers the day vividly. She and her classmates walked to Grand Central Boulevard to get the chance to see him in his car.

"It made an impression for me to be seeing the President of the United

States," Coney says. "And something he said that was profound. He said, 'It's not what the country can do for you, but what can you do for your country.' And that statement stayed with me."

Coney was no stranger to politics at a young age. She attended the Beulah Baptist Institutional Church where the Rev. A. Leon Lowry was pastor. In addition to being the pastor of the church, Lowry was the first Black member of the Hillsborough County School Board.

"He would teach us and talk about civil rights," Coney says. When the principal of Just Junior High School asked students if they would be interested in integrating the high schools in Tampa, Coney said yes. "I remember what John Kennedy had

neighborhood in West Tampa."

So, Coney, along with two other 13-year-old students, integrated West Tampa Middle School. Coney's mother was terrified and questioned why the 13-year-old wanted to leave her friends to attend a white school. They saw what was happening in Arkansas with the National Guard being called in because of violence, she recalls.

The assignment to integrate the school was a "greater call than the fear," Coney says. "I was determined I was going to go to that school, the white school, and make sure they knew we were smart, we were intelligent, that we were good people. There were a lot of misconceptions and beliefs about Black people during that time."

When she graduated middle school, she went to Jefferson High School. At Jefferson High School, Coney made the National Honor Society, was secretary of the student body and joined clubs. "I had a wonderful time. I just assimilated with them," Coney recalls.

In her junior year, she was the secretary of the Student Council. When she traveled to Pensacola for a statewide conference, she had to stay with a local Black family there because she was not allowed to stay at the hotel.

For her senior year, the county closed Jefferson High School, so she had to attend Hillsborough High School. She recalls it being "a rude awakening."

According to Coney, there was a lot of prejudice at the new high school. She vividly remembers the first pep rally she attended where the students were singing "Dixie's Land" and running around the field. The school auditorium housed a Confederate flag. Coney was shocked that these things were school-sanctioned.

Coney recalls she sometimes had to deal with rude students and teachers. She says she had no advocates at that time because the teachers had not been integrated. She recalls not having any Black teachers at Jefferson or Hillsborough high schools.

When she graduated, she was determined not to attend another white school. She passed up a scholarship to the

University of South Florida to attend FAMU. After graduating, she became the first Black, female probation officer in Hillsborough County.

"After I finished at Hillsborough (High School), I said, I'm through with this integration. I'm not going to ever do this again." Then representatives from the Department of Corrections came to FAMU. "They were looking for Blacks, and they promised us they were going to pay all of our student loans, so of course that got my attention." Coney notes she was grateful for the experience of integrating the schools because there was a lot of prejudice in the Department of Corrections.

While Coney notes that integration was a positive thing, she feels that the way it was done was not positive. "It had no sense of community ... More communication should have been done upfront." According to Coney, Jefferson High School was closed

because of accreditation issues. She says she was not told until the end of her junior year that she would be going to Hillsborough High School.



President John F. Kennedy's motorcade travels down Lafayette Street where it splits off from Grand Central in Tampa during Kennedy's visit to the area on November 18, 1963. Just four days later, the nation will mourn Kennedy's death in Dallas. Portions of the two streets were renamed Kennedy Boulevard in 1964. This was the first visit ever made by a sitting president to the Bay area. Times (1963).



## 1971

The U.S. Supreme Court approves busing, magnet schools, compensatory education and other tools as appropriate remedies to overcome the role of residential segregation in perpetuating racially segregated schools. (*Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenberg Board of Education*)

By court order, desegregation begins in Hillsborough County. Black and white students are bused to meet goals of student populations.

On June 2, Pinellas becomes the first Florida county to approve a voluntary, all-inclusive desegregation plan. The school board busing plan triggers racial unrest at Boca Ciega and Dixie Hollins high schools. On Oct. 12, two adults and two students are arrested at Dixie Hollins when riots break out over the decision to eliminate the Confederate flag as the school's official symbol.



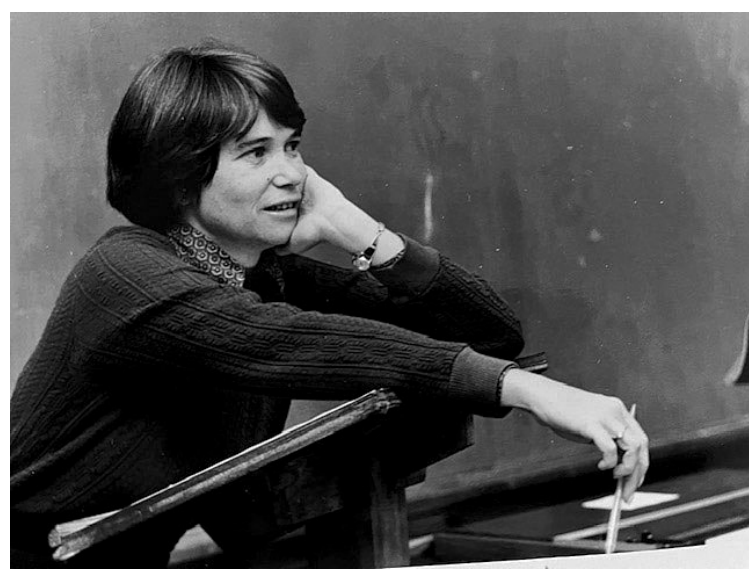
## 1972

*Brown's* legacy extends to gender. Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 passes, prohibiting sex discrimination in any educational program that receives federal financial assistance.

The Meadowlawn Little League Field in St. Petersburg, crowded with hundreds of people protesting a desegregation plan that calls for extensive busing. Times (1971).



# JAN ADKINS



Courtesy Jan Adkins.

**B**orn in Jacksonville, Fla. and raised in Georgia and Kentucky, Jan Adkins, a retired Pinellas County teacher, now lives in Clearwater. She spent 30 years teaching in Pinellas County Schools. Her first teaching experience was as a student teacher at Dixie Hollins High School the year before integration happened.

She moved to Pinellas County in the 1970s.

“There were clearly places where Black people were not welcome in this community,” Adkins says. She recalls the Interstate had just been built and it “literally cut the Black community apart. They destroyed a very vibrant community.” There was a lot of hostility in Pinellas County.

“I remember the (segregated) water fountains. I also remember that no Blacks were allowed on the elevators or on the escalators” in stores.

Her first professional teaching job was at Lealman Junior High School. “That was the first year of integration,” Adkins recalls. “I was a first-year

teacher in the fall of 1970 (the first year of desegregation in Pinellas). Bus duty was a minefield — both literally and figuratively. The gravel bus circle became ground zero as the buses... pulled out; teachers were pelted with gravel flying from bus windows. I always carried a book with me when I had bus duty... When I thought about it then, as well as now, in retrospect, I know that the justification for busing Black children was decidedly unjust. The Black community always bore the brunt of the falsehood of educational equality.”

Adkins notes that she “just made sure I didn’t get hit in the face” with the rocks being thrown from the bus. “That was happening in my school, but at Boca (Ciega High School), they had nunchucks and I remember thinking, what is a nunchuck?”

“I was in that school for three years, and that’s when they went to the middle school concept, and they moved ninth grade to high school.” Adkins went with the ninth grade students to Boca Ciega High School, where she recalls terrible riots, especially in the spring of 1973.

Adkins remembers that Boca Ciega High School was on double sessions the first year she taught there. With the influx of ninth graders, the administration decided to have the freshmen in the afternoon sessions, from 12:30 to 5:30 p.m. She recalls, “It was traumatic for the students” to be little fish in a big pond in high school, along with double sessions and integration.

Adkins recalls being a little nervous when she found out she would be teaching ninth grade at Boca Ciega. While the middle school students were throwing rocks at teachers, she remembers hearing about the violence at some of the high schools. She remembers hearing that gangs of kids were running out of classrooms. “It was very violent at Boca Ciega,” she notes.

When she taught at Boca Ciega, Adkins says, most of the violence and unrest took place in the morning sessions with the upperclassmen. She remembers things eventually calmed down, especially during her last five years there when she was the girls’ basketball coach.

Adkins recalls that things at the school calmed down after Hugh “Max” Kriever became Boca Ciega’s principal in the summer 1973.

Adkins recalls Kriever was a “very strong principal, and it was what that school needed.

“He was respected. He never asked you to do anything that he wouldn’t do. He was a very visible presence. He talked to kids. He interacted with those kids. And I think that really began to calm things down.”

In 1975, Adkins began coaching girls’ basketball. The team included

both white and Black students. She remembers driving kids home when the meets lasted until 11 p.m. She was never nervous in the Black communities. “Everybody knew me. Everybody knew my car. We achieved a lot in those five years. They worked together... I really think it played a huge role for me in, in terms of my own teaching and my awareness. It was just wonderful, wonderful experience.”



Courtesy Jan Adkins.



Deputy grapples with students during Boca Ciega High School racial disturbance. Times (1973).



Courtesy Jan Adkins.

## GOING BEYOND THE TEXT

### Analyzing timelines

Using the timeline in this publication, identify problems and issues facing Black Americans. Working in small groups on assigned issues, search the Florida Memory Project, the National Archives and local newspaper archives to find documents that describe the problem and consider opposing points of view, and suggest a remedy for the problem. Present the results of your research and what you have learned to your class.

Standards: SS.912.A.1.2; SS.912.A.1.3; SS.912.A.1.5; ELA.912.EE.1.1; ELA.912.EE.2.1; ELA.912.EE.3.1; ELA.912.EE.4.1; ELA.912.EE.5.1; ELA.912.EE.6.1; ELA.912.F.2.1; ELA.912.F.2.4; ELA.912.C.1.2; ELA.912.C.1.3; ELA.912.C.2.1; ELA.912.C.3.1; ELA.912.C.4.1; ELA.912.R.2.1; ELA.912.R.2.2; ELA.912.R.2.3; ELA.912.R.2.4

## 1974

The U.S. Supreme Court blocks metropolitan-wide desegregation plans as a means to desegregate urban schools with high minority populations (*Milliken v. Bradley*). As a result, *Brown* will not have a substantial impact on many racially isolated urban districts.

## 1988

School integration reaches its all-time high; almost 45 percent of Black students in the United States are attending majority-white schools.

## 1994

The NAACP Legal Defense Fund takes the Hillsborough School District back to court, accusing it of failing to comply with the 1971 court order by allowing 16 schools to become more than 40 percent Black. Some schools are between 70 and 90 percent Black.

U.S. District Judge Elizabeth Kovachevich. Times (1971).



## 1995

The U.S. Supreme Court sets a new goal for desegregation plans: the return of schools to local control. It emphasizes again that judicial remedies were intended to be “limited in time and extent” (*Missouri v. Jenkins*).

U.S. District Judge Elizabeth A. Kovachevich declines to rule on the question of racially identifiable schools and instead orders a hearing to determine whether the Hillsborough County School district is “unitary” — the legal term to describe a system that has become desegregated.



# MARK SAUNDERS

Mark Saunders grew up just outside of St. Augustine in Vilano Beach, where his parents had a tourist motel. From 1955 to 1960, the family owned a convenience store, gas pumps, eight rental cottages and a rental house, he notes.

nice spot on the beach, the sheriff would run them off.” Saunders attended a private Catholic school for elementary school, and then he entered the public school system in sixth grade after the family moved into town away from the beach. The family moved away from Florida for the

rest of his junior high school but returned to West Palm Beach in 1968. He remembers the school in Florida being somewhat integrated when he was in eighth grade.

Saunders remembers his high school years being on a dual campus. Riviera Beach High School was very old, he says. “It was a painted green building with no air conditioning and jalousie windows. Two miles down the road, there was almost a brand new high school, John F. Kennedy High School, for Black students. It was a two-story, white building with air conditioning. It was a more modern facility, so the administration linked the two schools and changed the name of the school to Suncoast High School. It was 1971 when Saunders entered tenth grade.

Saunders lived in Lake Park, about 10-12 blocks from the



Courtesy Mark Saunders.

school. He recalls the white families were lower income than the Black families, which were more middle class. He recalls the school being somewhat integrated, but he remembers there being a lot of tension because socioeconomically, some of the Black kids were doing better than the white kids.

He remembers there being a lot of fights at the bus stops and at football games. He also remembers the bomb scares, which happened frequently. “The old burly policeman would go in and look around,” he recalls, but there was never an actual bomb on campus.

Saunders says there were no police on campus, but the school was across the street from the Riviera Beach Police Station. “Ten times a day, there would be police cars driving in front of the campus.”

Saunders recalls the Black kids coming to the old building (Suncoast North), and the white students going to the new building (Suncoast South) by bus twice a



Mark Saunders and siblings (1960).  
Courtesy Mark Saunders.

“We were a hundred yards from the beach, right across from the ocean. Saunders recalls that the Ku Klux Klan was “pretty prevalent in that area.” He remembers Klan members talking to his father to tell him to stop selling to Black people. The people in town reprimanded him for playing with Black children. Everything in town was still segregated, Saunders says. The only place the Black people could swim was down at the jetty and by the rocks. “If they tried to have a



After being developed as a recreational area by prominent local Black businessman and entrepreneur Frank B. Butler, Butler Beach was the only beach Blacks were allowed to use between Jacksonville and Daytona Beach. Butler also owned a casino, inn, and other businesses, and led development of a subdivision of Black-owned homes. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory.

day. “We had to shuttle between classes. I found myself as the only white kid in tenth grade English class. He notes that it was interesting to see the Black kids on their home turf.

“They were relaxed, just regular kids,” Saunders notes, but “when the kids had to switch schools, there was tension. I think probably because the old building was a step down.”

Although the schools were technically integrated, Saunders notes there were still two principals with one reporting to the other. He also remembers that the Black students had their own prom.

## 1996

A federal appeals court prohibits the use of race in college and university admissions, ending affirmative action in Louisiana, Texas and Mississippi (*Hopwood v. Texas*).

## 1999

The Pinellas County School Board unanimously votes to spend \$110 million on construction of five new elementary schools and a new middle school, and to renovate Gibbs High School. The projects, all in south St. Petersburg and Gulfport, are a major step toward ending almost 30 years of court-enforced busing.

## 2000

The Hillsborough County School Board approves a controlled choice plan to replace busing to maintain racial balance. The lone dissenter is Doris Ross Reddick, the board's only Black member.

## 2001

The U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals orders Judge Kovachevich to declare Hillsborough schools unitary. At the start of the school year, 26 Hillsborough schools are more than 40 percent Black and 24 are less than 10 percent Black.



da Booth grew up in Thonotosassa, Fla., located in Hillsborough County. Her family were farmers, but her mother worked in the cafeteria at College Hill Elementary School, so that is where Booth attended school. When integration in Hillsborough County Schools began, Booth attended Young Junior High School.

# IDA BOOTH

For her tenth-grade year, in 1971, Booth attended Middleton High School, which at the time was one of three schools for Black students in the county. The following year, the school closed, and the students were rezoned.

“We had no clue,” that the school was being closed before it happened. “I cannot tell you how devastated we were. We had grown up with these schools with the intention of, you know, going to these schools. They were part of our lives. Part of the community.”

She says there was never a conversation about closing Middleton and Blake High Schools. The closings were like “a death,” she describes.



“People grieved for a long time. There are some people who died in recent years that just never got over not being able to continue their education at the school of their choice. We were scattered all over the place.”

In Booth’s sophomore year at Middleton, she was elected student council president. She could not be president when she was rezoned to Hillsborough High School. She remembers it being a hurtful experience, but she did not let that stop her love of learning.

“I have fond memories of high school because I just love learning.” Booth was in advanced placement classes and graduated from

Hillsborough High School with almost a 4.0 grade point average.

“I enjoyed school.” She recalls there being only two Black students in her classes. She says she assimilated well, though, and made good friends. “I knew flights were going

on outside of the classes that I was in,” she says “There were fights in the courtyard, and it was difficult. Some people just don’t assimilate.”

Booth says, “We

had to start somewhere. When you look at civilization, you have to grow. You grow and everything is not easy. Everything is never going to be great for someone. And if you just look at the history of civilization, that’s what it has been. We have growing pains ... Now Black people and white people can at least have a conversation.

“They can live amongst each other now. You can even get married to someone of a different color. So yes, while it was harsh, while it was very difficult, and it was most difficult for those kids that were used to integrate back in the days, what they had to go through that we’re talking about being brave to endure this. You know, I have tears in my eyes, thinking what those children had to do being escorted to school by police officers who didn’t give a care about them at all.”

Booth notes the focus of the court case was to stop denying children an equal education. “We were getting the hand-me-down books. The books that were no longer utilized did not have the best information.” She is thankful that her teachers made the best of the situation despite the old books and lack of a decent pay.

Despite her love of school and learning, Booth notes, “The grieving process (for the closing of Black



Courtesy Ida Booth.



Hillsborough High School campus in July 1962. Times (1962).

schools) was many years.

“Some of us were able to move on, but we don’t forget. You don’t forget how things transpired. We, as children, didn’t know how it happened. We felt betrayed by those in the upper echelon because they didn’t tell us. They didn’t warn us. We weren’t eased into it.”

Booth advises young people: “Know who you are. Be proud of who you are. And never let anyone tell you you’re any less than a human being. Don’t pay any attention to them ... Just keep moving.”

## GOING BEYOND THE TEXT

# Compare and contrast

Prior to the landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, there were several court cases related to school desegregation and Hispanic children. In 1945, nine years before the *Brown v. Board* decision, parents of Mexican-American children brought suit against several school districts in California in the case *Mendez v. Westminster*. Go to [docsteach.org/documents/document/petition-mendez/23455/1](http://docsteach.org/documents/document/petition-mendez/23455/1) to read the case of *Mendez v. Westminster*. Read and analyze the petition with the parents’ complaint, and answer the following questions:

- Who are the petitioners in the case?
- Who are the respondents in the case?
- On what grounds do the petitioners state that their children are unable to attend certain schools?
- Specifically what rights do the petitioners state have been violated?
- What do the petitioners request be done to rectify the situation?

Compare the *Mendez v. Westminster* case with what you know about the later *Brown v. Board of Education* case. What are some similarities? What are some differences? Do you think the outcome of the *Mendez* case influenced the *Brown* case? Why or why not? Using the editorials and opinion articles in your local newspaper as models, write an editorial based on the information you have learned. Source: National Archives

Standards: SS.912.A.1.1; SS.912.A.1.2; SS.912.A.1.6; SS.912.A.1.7; SS.912.AA.3; ELA.912.EE.1.1; ELA.912.EE.2.1; ELA.912.EE.3.1; ELA.912.EE.4.1; ELA.912.EE.5.1; ELA.912.EE.6.1; ELA.912.F.2.1; ELA.912.F.2.4; ELA.912.C.1.2; ELA.912.C.1.3; ELA.912.C.2.1; ELA.912.C.3.1; ELA.912.C.4.1; ELA.912.R.2.1; ELA.912.R.2.2; ELA.912.R.2.3; ELA.912.R.2.4

### 2003

The U.S. Supreme Court upholds diversity as a rationale for affirmative action programs in higher education admissions, but concludes that point systems are not appropriate (*Grutter v. Bollinger*; *Gratz v. Bollinger*).

The controlled choice plan begins in Pinellas County Schools.

### 2004

Controlled choice debuts in Hillsborough County Schools.

### 2007

Controlled choice ends in Pinellas County. For the first time since 1971, Pinellas Schools will not use race when assigning students to schools.

### 2023

Governor Ron DeSantis signs into law House Bill 1, an expansion of Florida’s Family Empowerment Scholarship, to create universal school choice across the state.

#### TIMELINE SOURCES:

- ◆ Tampa Bay Times archives
- ◆ Florida Department of Education
- ◆ Public Broadcasting System
- ◆ *Mangroves to Major League: A Timeline of St. Petersburg, Florida*, by Rick Baker (2000)
- ◆ *Unsilient Revolution: Television News and American Public Life, 1948-1991*, by Robert J. Donovan (1992)
- ◆ Teaching Tolerance Magazine, Spring 2004: *BROWN V. BOARD: Timeline of School Integration in the U.S.* National Archives

“

*I had just started teaching. I was learning my craft and establishing my discipline. Because the Black school had been closed and the students absorbed into the student body of the white school, there was a great deal of tension. The result was fighting, name-calling and distrust. The Black kids had lost their school, their mascot and some of their teachers. I felt sorry for this loss since many of their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents had attended that school. A school is much more than a building.”*

**Carol Tucker, Hernando County**



Citrus County teacher Annie Mae McCray with her class of first graders during the first year of faculty desegregation in Citrus County. Times (1967).

## About Florida Humanities

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The mission of Community Tampa Bay (CTB) is to cultivate inclusive leaders to change communities through dialogue and cross-cultural interactions. Founded in the Tampa Bay region in the 1940s, Community Tampa Bay was formerly a regional affiliate of the National Conference for Christians and Jews, which later became known as the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ). They became an independent 501(c)(3) in 2005, adopting the name Community Tampa Bay. CTB's programs train and cultivate individuals who make a difference in institutions and communities by influencing others through dialogue and cross-cultural interactions. For more information about CTB, visit [communitytampabay.org](http://communitytampabay.org). Like CTB on Facebook at [facebook.com/CommunityTampaBay](https://www.facebook.com/CommunityTampaBay) and follow them on X, formerly known as Twitter, at [twitter.com/CommunityTB](https://twitter.com/CommunityTB).



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Cover photo: Rickards High School students in class on Sept. 3, 1967, the first day of desegregated schools in Tallahassee. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory.

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