School Desegregation

Marion Butts Collection
Dallas Public Library
Dallas Express 11-08-1947.
Historical African-American school photos
Booker T. Washington High School photo, 1907
John and Ethelyn M. Chisum Collection
Historical African-American school photos
Ethelyn M. Chisum, left, and her class in 1915
John and Ethelyn Chisum Collection
In 1954, the Supreme Court issued the Brown vs. the Board of Education decision that stated that separate public schools for black and white students and denying black children equal opportunity was unconstitutional.

The NAACP asked for desegregation to begin in Dallas and was told, that no, the ruling by the Supreme Court was “one of philosophy and policy and not a directive or a decree directing that segregation be done.”

Dallas Times Herald, 9-2-1954
In the 1950s, Dallas continued to sidestep the issue of desegregation in public schools. In 1956, Dallas School Board President Dr. Edwin L. Rippy said, “he did not approve of the Supreme Court decree” because he felt the “Negro race had accomplished much in a short time” and that the “goal of equal rights would happen through natural evolution in the near future.” He also said he did not want to be the first to integrate. He pointed out differences in state and federal laws and called for further study to eliminate any conflict. He also noted the financial strain it would put on the school district.

*Dallas Times Herald* 10-2-1956

In 1959, the Dallas School Board offered this annual statement concerning desegregation (paraphrased): “In district court, the board reported progress of comprehensive studies concerning integration and continued to work to clarify the conflict between federal and state laws pertaining to the matter.” The judge chose not to order desegregation at the hearing.

The Dallas School Board used statements such as “an alteration of the present status of segregation in the immediate future would be catastrophic both academically and financially” to continue to not implement desegregation.

*(Dallas Times Herald, 8-27-1959)*

The NAACP petitioned the courts to require immediate integration of Dallas schools in 1959. The motion was denied and Dallas public schools continued to be segregated.
Photograph after ruling not to end segregation

*Dallas Times Herald, 7-31-1959*
Like other cities in the South, the city of Dallas did not integrate until court ordered in 1961. There were many court cases in the six years before integration and there was fear that anything other than a gradual implementation could result in riots such as happened in Little Rock, Arkansas.

One of the best plans to come out of the court ordered integration was a bi-racial committee of the Dallas City Council. This committee saw that for integration to work in public schools, it must also be implemented in public places such as lunch counters. The Dallas School Board decided to adopt Nashville’s “Stairstep Plan” which called for a gradual integration.

On the morning of September 6, 1961, ten African-American girls and eight African-American boys entered eight different elementary schools without any problems. Dallas was the last of the major urban cities and the last of Texas cities to desegregate.
Slow Integration
For Dallas Blasted
By NAACP Leader
Wilkins Critical Of 12-Year Plan

By AL HESTER, Staff Writer

If the Dallas School Board adopts a 12-year gradual integration plan it will be cheating little children out of their right to a good education, one of the nation’s top Negro leaders said Saturday.

Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the National Assn. for the Advancement of Colored People, said such a plan beginning in the first grade and progressing a grade each year is not fair.

Dallas Times Herald, 3/6/1960
Dallas...cannot afford to fumble the ball with token desegregation.

Dallas Express, 8-5-1961
City Girls To Accept Desegregation Honorably

Role Of Press Is Lauded In Move To Obey Court’s Order

Winston-Salem’s Ending President
Returns To His First Love—Teaching

3 Muhammad Cats Are Ordered Jail

It Pays To Advertise

Freshest taste in bread

Over 200 New Students At Wiley Sept 14

Headline and story on the implementation of the desegregation plan

Dallas Express, 8-21-1961
Eight Dallas Public Schools Integrate Peacefully

The 400-Room Hotel Receives All Guests

The Rev. E. C. Estall Endorses Jackson for President

By LORIS LANTIER

Thursday, representing approximately 800 people of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Dr. Estall gave the keynote address at the opening ceremonies of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's national convention in Dallas.

In his address, Dr. Estall praised the efforts of the NAACP in promoting civil rights and leading the fight against discrimination. He also encouraged the gathering to remain united and continue their work in the struggle for equality.

18 Negro Children Enrolled In Previous All-White Schools

By JUNIA HOY

Dallas schools and the state of Texas have integrated in recent years, allowing these 16 Negro children to attend previously all-white schools in various communities.

Bishop's Motorcade, Ribbon Cutting Ceremony Hour Changed

Dallas, TX - The motorcade and ribbon cutting ceremony for Bishop's Motor Hotel will be held on Thursday, September 29. The original event was scheduled for 4 p.m., but due to traffic concerns, it has been moved to 8 p.m.

Miss Rollins To Teach In Washington

By JULIA BAILEY

Dr. Rollins has been appointed as a teacher at the Lincoln School in Washington, DC. The school, founded by Dr. J. E. Bruce, is a co-educational school that focuses on providing a quality education to children from low-income families.

Vice Found In Automobile Fatally Stabbed

By WILLIAM WILSON

Police arrested a 19-year-old male, James Smith, in connection with the stabbing death of a woman found in an automobile in Dallas. The victim, named as Jane Doe, was discovered by a passerby who reported the incident to authorities.

Our Prayer

By JUNE SUTHERLAND

May the Lord bless and keep you. May He show you His perfect peace that is beyond all understanding, and may He lead you into the way of peace.
Q U I E T  I N T E G R A T I O N  D A Y

James Davis, in the picture at right, one of seven Negro children admitted Wednesday to Amelia Earhart School, and a white classmate begin their first day of classes. Above, Barbara Ann Mullins, 7, and her father, Leon Mullins, left, enter Thomas A. Edison Elementary School to secure a transfer to an all-Negro school.—Staff Photos.

T W O  M O R E  D A L L A S  S C H O O L S  I N T E G R A T E D

Sept. 1962
Dallas School Board Sets Stage For Desegregation In September Of '62

Goldbery Explains Program To NAACP Executive

Dateline Dallas...

To Integrate First And Second Grades This Fall

By Rev. James, Dallas, Texas

In accordance with the plans desegregation plan for Dallas schools, the Dallas School Board has scheduled the dates of August 4th through August 8th as the period for student attendance for the desegregation program to begin.

It is important to note that the School Board has agreed to implement this program to ensure a smooth transition for all students. The program will be implemented in phases, starting with the first and second grades. The schedule for the program is as follows:

August 4th: First and second grade students will attend school normally.

August 5th: A orientation day for students and parents will be held.

August 6th: Second grade students will attend school normally.

August 7th: First grade students will attend school normally.

August 8th: A final orientation day for students and parents will be held.

The School Board has also invited members of the NAACP to observe the desegregation program to ensure that it is implemented fairly and effectively.

Liberia Is 115 Years Old

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Liberia celebrated its 115th anniversary on June 20, 1968, with a festive event attended by dignitaries from around the world. The celebration was held at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, where attendees were treated to a range of educational and cultural programs.

The event included a performance by a traditional African drumming group, a keynote address by a prominent Liberia-born scholar, and a display of historical artifacts and photographs. Attendees were also invited to take part in interactive activities, such as drumming lessons and storytelling sessions.

The celebration of Liberia's 115th anniversary was a proud moment for the country, which was founded in 1852 by freed American slaves. Liberia is the world's first black republic, and its establishment marked a significant milestone in the fight against slavery and colonialism.

Though the "stair-step" plan of desegregation was ordered by the Federal Courts in the spring of 1961, this plan can only be accepted as a beginning and it cannot be looked upon as an acceptable plan for Negroes who are currently denied equal educational opportunities.
Even as students were allowed to attend all white schools, others were turned away due to the slow adoption of the tiered plan.

*Dallas Times Herald, 9-4-1962*
Although integration was peaceful, it was not a fast process in Dallas. Dallas was charged with implementing “token segregation” which was not satisfactory to either African-Americans or the federal government.

In 1970, Sam Tasby filed a lawsuit in federal court charging DISD with continuing use of a dual school system prohibited under Brown. This lawsuit resulted in the second plan ordered by the judge on the case. The new plan was called the “Confluence of Cultures Desegregation Plan.”

The new plan was rejected twice by the Fifth Circuit Court, primarily on the divisive issue of busing. African-American students felt unwelcome in their new schools and parents of white students were continuing to pull their children out of Dallas public schools and moving to new school districts or private schools. (“white flight”) The new judge on the case worked with the Dallas Independent School District to remove busing long distances, particularly for younger children. The new policy encouraged a kind of “natural integration” that would work with the student and his or her family to find the best arrangement for the individual.

The Dallas School Board ended their fight for schools to be more fully integrated in the early 80s. The court order for desegregation was removed in 2003.