

Brown V. Board Of Education Of Topeka

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Historical Context of School Segregation

Contemporary issues in the history of the modern United States education system are described from history dating to the 1840s during the Common School movement. The modern term has been used since the 19th century, and it is used to refer to the modern things described by history from the past. The current form of education in the United States is a result of the contemporary changes that happened between 1896 and 1954 (Rubenser, 2017). *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* is among the memorable court verdicts that have shaped our system of education to date. The court was a landmark decision made by the Supreme Court in the year 1954.

Supreme Court Ruling in Brown

In the case, the Supreme Court justices ruled that Brown's case and unanimously the racial segregation of children from the public schools within the United States were unconstitutional. This court case is considered one of the foundations of the human rights movement in America. It helped in the creation of the precedence that separate but equal in education, plus other sectors were not equal.

Plessy v Ferguson and Separate but Equal

A Supreme Court ruling in the year 1896 on Plessy versus Ferguson marked the beginning of a new era when all public facilities were segregated legally by the law, even though the facilities for both Black Americans and whites were considered equal. This great ruling constitutionally endorsed the law excluding African Americans from partaking in the same schools, buses, plus other public amenities since the law of separate but equal was officially established by the Supreme Court (Rubenser, 2017). The doctrine of separate but equal stood for about six decades until the 1950s when human rights activists started fighting for equality amongst all races of human beings.

NAACP Legal Challenges to Segregation

The *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People* began working on how to challenge the great ruling in the year 1950s. They started challenging segregation laws in public schools, and they filed lawsuits in place for plaintiffs in other states like Virginia, Delaware and South Carolina (Burger et al. 2016). In a case that would later be considered one of the greatest of all time in history,

plaintiff Oliver Brown filed a kind of class-action suit in contradiction to the *Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, in the year 1951. Oliver Brown filed the court case after his daughter was denied entry to Topeka's white elementary school. In his filed petition, Brown claimed that there was inequality between the segregated schools meant for the blacks and those meant for the whites, and this violated the clause of equal protection as it was in the 14th Constitution amendment. The amendment stated that no state has the mandate to deny an individual the right of equal protection law. The case went ahead to the District Court in Kansas, where the members of the jury admitted that segregation in public schools was detrimental to the coloured children, hence contributing to the sense of inferiority; however, the court upheld the separate but equal canon.

Consolidation of School-Segregation Cases

When four other cases relating to segregation in schools came before the Supreme Court in 1952, they were combined into a single file named *Brown versus the Board of Education of Topeka*. The chief attorney for the plaintiffs was Marshal Thurgood, who was by then the head of the NAACP Educational Fund and Legal Defense (Burger et al. 2016). Marshal was appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson thirteen years later to be the first African American to be a justice in the Supreme Court.

Judicial Deliberation and Unanimous Decision

At the beginning of the hearing of the case, the Supreme Court justices were separated or instead divided in their opinions over what could be done on the case. Later, the Chief Justice went ahead and ruled that the Plessy verdict stands. Later, in 1953, before the hearing of the case, the Chief Justice died and was replaced by Earl Warren, who was then the governor of California. Exhibiting considerable political skill in his ruling, the new chief justice made the unanimous judgment against school segregation (López & Burciaga, 2014). In his ruling, he said in the civic schooling segment, the separate but equal doctrine has no place since segregated schools are integrally unequal. This great ruling in US history marked the beginning of another new era in the field of education for the whole of the United States.

Impact on the Civil Rights Movement

This ruling marked the beginning of the civil rights movement, which pushed for more freedom for whites in the United States. It was followed by another milestone decision in the case of Runyon versus McCrary that made even the nonsectarian and private schools adhere to the law of equality that applied to public schools. The overturning of separate but equal by Warren provided a legal precedent from which the laws that enforced segregation in public amenities were turned down legally.

Conclusion on the Legacy of Brown

In summary, *the Brown versus the Education Board* case is historical, and its effects are still felt in the contemporary modern schools we have (López & Burciaga, 2014). However, with the ruling having prevailed, it still ran short of its mission, which was the integration of public schools. Contemporary issues are still being debated combating racial inequalities in the schools within the US based on the patterns of residence and variations in the level of resources amongst the wealthier and poor in the country.

References

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