



THE ACHIEVER

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Summer Reading Program Launched in 10 Cities, One State

Thousands of students will benefit this summer from a pilot reading program under *No Child Left Behind* launched at 11 sites nationwide last month. The *No Child Left Behind* Summer Reading Achievers Program encourages students in grades K-8 to read actively during the summer months to avoid the loss of reading skills that often occurs during summer vacation. The program was piloted last year in Atlanta Public Schools, with nearly 18,000 students participating.

This year's pilot program will operate at the following sites: Springfield, Mass.; Portsmouth, N.H.; Pittsburgh, Pa.; Camden, N.J.; Atlanta, Ga.; Gainesville, Fla.; Kansas City, Kan.; Minneapolis, Minn.; Albuquerque, N.M.; San Diego, Calif.; and the state of South Dakota. The sites were selected

based on support from community and business groups as well as active school district leaders who are working to reduce the achievement gap.

To participate in the program, students must read 10 age-appropriate books during the summer months. Students will be required to describe briefly the books they have read by completing a simple form. Prizes and certificates will be awarded to successful students, and special recognition will be given to schools with the highest percentages of participating students.

In addition, along with the contributions from partner organizations, the U.S. Department of Education will conduct local workshops and provide materials and certificates.

Contributing sponsors for the 2004 program include First Book, Target Stores, Scholastic, Inc., USA Football, the National PTA, the Boys and Girls Clubs of America and Communities in Schools, Inc.

50 Years After Brown

Architect of Landmark Case Recalls History and Meaning of "Separate and Unequal" Ruling



Judge Robert L. Carter

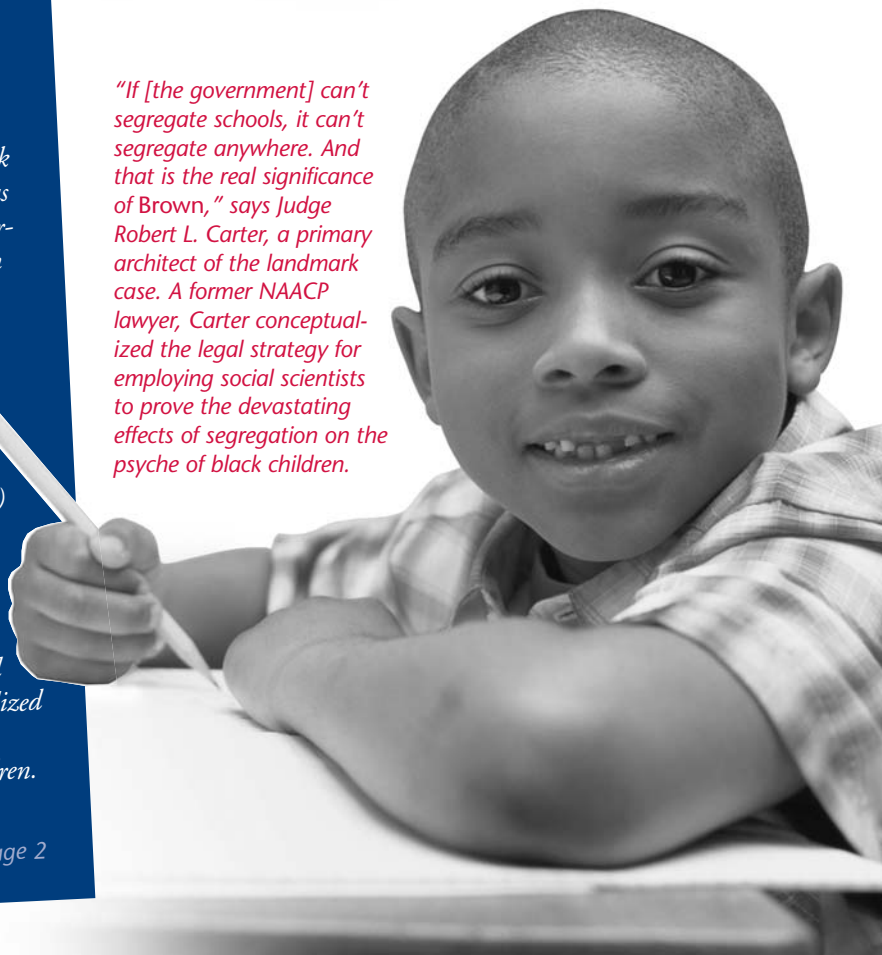
Fifty years ago, Linda Brown, a black third-grader in Topeka, Kansas, was barred from attending her neighborhood elementary school. Her small-town story would provide the legal basis for dismantling racial segregation in schools and public facilities throughout the country. On behalf of Linda's father and nearly

200 plaintiffs from four other states, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court in an all-out challenge to enforced racial segregation in schools. On May 17, 1954, the Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."

NAACP lawyer Robert L. Carter, assistant to Thurgood Marshall, was a primary architect of *Brown*. He conceptualized the legal strategy for employing social scientists to prove the devastating effects of segregation on the psyche of black children. In addition to the *Brown* caseload, Carter, who served as

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"If [the government] can't segregate schools, it can't segregate anywhere. And that is the real significance of Brown," says Judge Robert L. Carter, a primary architect of the landmark case. A former NAACP lawyer, Carter conceptualized the legal strategy for employing social scientists to prove the devastating effects of segregation on the psyche of black children.





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Department of Education (ED). Rod Paige, Secretary.

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counsel for the NAACP from 1944 to 1968, would go on to argue 18 more suits before the high court that proved to be major cases of the civil rights era. In an interview that will appear in a Court-TV special on May 17, celebrating the 50th anniversary of Brown, Carter, now 87 years old, reflects on the one case that marked a legal and civil triumph in American history. An excerpt follows.

“Brown came down when the Cold War was at its height. And

my own feeling was that our top institutions were not in a position to make a national decision that was anti-democratic when really, in fact, that’s what was the problem of the tyrants of the world. ... I think the Cold War helped make [the Supreme Court decision] unanimous.

“We’re democratic. We don’t believe in distinctions based on race and color. We’re going to come down with a decision. Somebody on the Supreme Court is going to have to write a minority opinion that says that we should have distinction based on race? Of course not. [The Supreme Court justices] were constrained by that. Whatever their feelings were, I don’t think they could express them nationally.”

Brown’s impact on American society ...

“... You can’t remove the government and say the government can’t maintain segregated schools and then say it can maintain segregated employment or then say it can maintain segregated housing. ... when you do that, the government’s hand is removed entirely. It can’t rationalize—maintain segregation here and not there. If it can’t segregate schools, it can’t segregate anywhere. And that is the real significance of *Brown*, because it removed ... the government from enforcing segregation. So the govern-

ment, since 1954, can’t enforce segregation. It can’t enforce that kind of discrimination. And it hasn’t meant very much up to now, but the ceilings are beginning to be pierced.”

The challenge that remains ...

“If you go to the central city in New York today, for example, you’ll find exactly how the schools were at that time. They had insufficient facilities, poorly trained teachers. And the central city schools now, where black people are concentrated, are the same. ...

“Well, now when I go around to audiences, black audiences in particular, like the NAACP people and so forth, I tell them that I want them to concentrate on education. I think that these kids have got to get an education, a decent education so that they can be competitive. ...

“Concentrate on education is my feeling. And try for the next several years ... to get those schools in the central cities in such shape that the kids can come out of them and can be competitive. I think that’s essential. That’s my number one priority.”

Although the Brown mandate initially faced some resistance, schools around the country immediately began integrating black and white students, such as the Barnard School in Washington, D.C., pictured below in 1955.



Photo courtesy of Library of Congress (Reproduction No. LC-U9-183B-20)

"Brown is the 20th century's emancipation proclamation. As with the legal end of slavery, the legal end of segregation awakened the conscience of our nation. The law, like any principle, can only state what needs to be done and the path of where we need to go. It is up to the people to decide whether to follow, to believe in their hearts that no matter what the circumstances of their birth, everyone has an equal opportunity to the best of what is possible in our country."

The Honorable Eric Rosen, district court judge in Shawnee County, Kan., and a member of the *Brown v. Board of Education* 50th Anniversary Commission.

Paige's Circle



The following is an excerpt from the speech "Fifty Years After *Brown v. Board of Education*: What Has Been Accomplished and What Remains to Be Done?" given by U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige at Harvard University last month:

"I wonder if people who haven't lived through it can imagine segregation. It offered no hope, no opportunity for change, no trust and no humanity. It reached into every home and place of business in Mississippi and throughout the South. The schools bred racism—actually encouraged it. Children were taught that separate facilities were educationally necessary and that unequal treatment was somehow manifestly good. ...

"The law was no help; it actually codified this hatred. In 1896, in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Supreme Court found that segregation could be justified because of, in the exact words of the decision, 'established usages, customs, and traditions of the people, with a view to the promotion of their comfort, and the preservation of the public peace and good order.' ...

"But 50 years ago, the Supreme Court, in overturning that odious decision, sent seismic shock waves through this country. ...

"Because of the *Brown* decision, we are a stronger, more equitable, more just nation. But we still have a long way to go. ...

"Equality of opportunity is more than just a statement of law; it must be a matter of fact. And factually speaking, millions of children in this country do not yet have equal opportunity. There has been much discussion recently of internal segregation in our schools and a process of re-segregation between schools. ...

"Millions of children are left behind. ... And we know these students: African-American, Hispanic, low-income, special-needs and English-learning. And this in the 21st century, not the 1950s. ...

"It may take generations to finally achieve equality of opportunity. But a race-free society must start with fair and inclusive education. That is where we must build the foundation of fairness, hope and decency. ...

"We have much work to do. There are still many difficult trials ahead. There will be strident opposition. But with No Child Left Behind I believe the president and the Congress have taken this country one step closer to a race-free society. And, with each step, we get closer to fulfilling the promise of *Brown v. Board of Education*."

For the full speech, visit www.ed.gov/news/speeches/2004/04/04222004.html.

Close-Up:



Brown v. Board of Education

On May 17, President George W. Bush, U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige and other officials plan to join in the 50th anniversary celebration of *Brown v. Board of Education*—the 1954 Supreme Court ruling that outlawed racial segregation in U.S. schools. The anniversary ceremony will be held in Topeka, Kan., at the

Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site. The site consists of Monroe Elementary School, one of the four segregated elementary schools for African-American children in Topeka that figured in the *Brown* ruling.

Also in attendance will be congressional leaders, descendants of plaintiffs from the cases and members of the *Brown v. Board of Education* 50th Anniversary Commission. The commission, established by Congress in 2001, includes representatives from the states that played a role in the *Brown* litigation, as well as leaders from the federal government, the Brown Foundation, and the NAACP.

The ceremony, which will be opened to the public on a limited-seating basis, follows a yearlong series of activities to commemorate the anniversary, including public lectures, writing contests and public awareness campaigns. Following the anniversary date, the commission intends to continue informing the public on the legacy of this landmark case. The U.S. Department of Education is also working with Court TV on a live webcast originating from Topeka on May 17.

For more information, visit <http://brownvboard.org>.

Did You Know?

Although *Brown v. Board of Education* was named after the plaintiff Oliver Brown whose daughter was denied access to her neighborhood school, the case was initiated and organized by leadership at the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) who recruited African-American parents in Topeka for a class-action suit against the school board. Cases from other school districts—in Virginia, Delaware, South Carolina and the District of Columbia—were also part of the historic case.

Source: *Brown v. Board of Education* Myths v. Truths, Brown Foundation.

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FIRST CLASS



**“When it comes to
the education of our
children ... failure is
not an option.”**

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

REMEMBERING OUR HEROES! *Memorial Day's Moment of Remembrance*



On Memorial Day—May 31, 2004—Americans are being asked to spend a moment of remembrance at 3 p.m. local time to honor those who died in service for our country. Sponsored by the White House Commission on Remembrance, this “National Moment of Remembrance” sets aside a time for Americans to observe that the civil liberties they enjoy cost the lives and sacrifices of innumerable soldiers who have courageously fought in our nation’s wars.

Another initiative intended to be a unifying act of remembrance for Americans of all ages involves elementary schoolchildren putting patriotism into action. “Patriots Patrol” seeks to teach children about the American spirit, including the idea that even a small act, done when working together, can make the country stronger. This program was launched in December 2001 with a special project called “Pennies from Heaven,” in which students collected pennies to help buy remembrance gifts for children who lost a loved one in the September 11th attacks.

The White House Commission on Remembrance, a bipartisan, independent agency established by Congress, is dedicated to encouraging generations of Americans to remember the sacrifices and costs in human life made to preserve our liberties, and to instill in them an understanding of what it means to be an American.

For other suggested ways to participate in the National Moment of Remembrance, visit <http://remember.gov>.