

2009 Status Report of the

Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Awards Committee



Legislative History

The *Brown v. Board of Education* Scholarship Program and Fund was created by the 2004 General Assembly, within the legislative branch of government, in response to Virginia's two-year long commemoration of the 50th anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*. The Program is designed to assist persons who were enrolled in the public schools of Virginia during Massive Resistance between 1954 and 1964, in jurisdictions in which the public schools were closed to avoid desegregation. The enabling legislation was amended in 2005 and 2006. Currently, eligible persons may use the award to obtain an adult high school diploma, the General Education Development certificate, CLEP credit, career or technical education or training, transitional education services, a two-year degree, or a four-year degree from an accredited public or private Virginia institution of higher education.

Program Governance

The *Brown v. Board of Education* Scholarship Awards Committee, consisting of legislative and nonlegislative citizen members, administers the Scholarship Program. The Division of Legislative Services provides staff support and the State Council of Higher Education provides technical assistance and disburses scholarship funds to approved educational Programs and institutions upon the request of the Committee. The Committee is also assisted by an appointed counseling and technical advisory subcommittee composed of representatives of relevant state agencies, public and private institutions of higher education, persons with expertise in adult education and literacy, career and technical education and training, college admissions, financial aid, and legislative and public policy.

Appropriations and Other Resources

The 2009-2010 Appropriations Act provided \$25,000 in each year of the biennium for the support of the Committee's work. This appropriation does not represent monies in the Fund that are dedicated solely to scholarship awards.

2009 Statutory Changes

House Bill 1893 (Dance) amended the enabling statute for the *Brown v. Board of Education* Scholarship Program to provide that awards may be used to cover the costs of required academic fees, in addition to tuition and textbooks already provided by state law, and graduate study at the masters and doctoral levels, as determined by the Awards Committee. The amendments also clarify the Committee's authority to establish policies, standards, and rules to govern the Program, thereby strengthening its accountability for and authority to administer and oversee the Program. The Committee's policies will be revised to reflect the new changes that become effective on July 1, 2009. Applicants, recipients, and all approved educational programs will be advised of these changes.

2009 *Brown* Scholars Graduation and Completion

Five *Brown* Scholars were graduated from Saint Paul's College on May 10, 2009. They are:

Alda Booth
Charity Dove
Melvin Dove
Rebecca Randolph
Linda Smith

Special Subcommittee on Public School Closings in Virginia

The public school closings in Virginia and the national commemoration of the landmark decision in *Brown* will be recognized locally and nationally. In 2004, the General Assembly directed the King Commission to lead and coordinate the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the *Brown* decision, and to follow through on subsequent initiatives and outcomes of the observance. Consequently, to facilitate its work in this regard, the Commission has established the Special Subcommittee on the Fiftieth Anniversary of Public School Closings in Virginia and has invited the *Brown* Scholarship Committee to collaborate with it in this endeavor. Delegate Dance, Chairwoman of the *Brown v. Board of Education* Scholarship Committee, has accepted the Commission invitation to work with it to lead the Commonwealth's commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the closing of public schools in many Virginia localities and the 55th anniversary of the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, two historic events and milestones in Virginia and United States history which converge in 2009.

The Special Subcommittee on the Fiftieth Anniversary of Public School Closings in Virginia will be responsible for planning, developing, leading, and coordinating the statewide observance of these historic events, including a Presidential state visit to the Commonwealth to mark this occasion. In addition to members of the King Commission and the *Brown* Scholarship Committee, the Special Subcommittee will include representatives of the legal, business and corporate communities, the state and federal court systems, professional education organizations, public and higher education officials, teachers, historians, relevant state agencies and local governing bodies, community organizations, recent *Brown* scholars, and localities in which public schools were closed to avoid desegregation. The Special Subcommittee will also work closely with the Governor's Office in planning the President's visit.

It is envisioned that an organizational meeting of the Special Subcommittee will be held in June 2009. The King Commission deliberated on yesterday concerning these matters. Senator Marsh and Delegate Dance will lead the Special Subcommittee. Several nonlegislative citizens who have been invited to serve on the Special Subcommittee have responded favorably to the invitation. It is anticipated that the June meeting date will be announced by the House and Senate Clerks offices soon.