

Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Committee



VIRGINIA'S REDEMPTIVE MOMENT

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUILDING
HOUSE ROOM C
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA**

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Historical Setting



Massive Resistance



Jefferson School 6th Grade Class, 1928/29. (Courtesy of Rebecca McGinnis)

Virginia's Role



- State laws before American Civil War prohibited education of enslaved Africans
- Jim Crow laws after Reconstruction continued the rigid system of segregation in all areas of society
- “Separate but equal” laws remained unchallenged
- Throughout Virginia, school conditions, textbooks, bus transportation, cafeteria, and equipment for African Americans were grossly inferior to schools for white students
- Parents, students, community disturbed by the gross inequities in public education

Virginia's Role



- On April 23, 1951, Barbara Johns led students at Robert Russa Moton High School in Farmville on a strike for improved education.
-  The students met with NAACP attorneys in Richmond.
- The student led strike resulted in *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*, one of five cases, (*Briggs v. Clarendon County*, South Carolina; *Belton V. Gebhart* and *Bulah v. Gebhart*, Delaware; *Bolling v. Sharpe*, District of Columbia) consolidated as *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*.
- Facts in the Virginia were the inspiration and legal basis for the argument in *Brown* before the Supreme Court.
- U.S. Supreme Court ruled “separate but equal” unconstitutional and ordered desegregation of public schools.

Virginia's Response



- Governor Stanley appointed the Commission on Education in 1954.
- The Commission recommended 12 legislative actions to maintain separate educational facilities for the races.
- Virginia's Constitution amended in 1955 to allow state funds to be used to pay tuition grants and scholarships to private, segregated schools when public schools closed.
- In 1956, the General Assembly implemented the legal infrastructure for "Massive Resistance."
- In 1957, members of the NAACP, plaintiffs, and attorneys in Virginia desegregation cases brought before the General Assembly for interrogation.

Virginia's Response



- In 1958, the General Assembly passed laws that allowed for the closing of public schools whenever military forces were used by the federal government to enforce school desegregation.
- Localities were authorized to use state funded tuition grants to send white children to private schools when public schools were closed.
- Governor closes Charlottesville, Norfolk, and Warren County public schools, in 1958 to circumvent the court's ruling.
- Massive Resistance was abandoned in 1959 for "Freedom of Choice" and the repealing of compulsory school attendance laws.
- Prince Edward County public schools closed for five years, 1959-1964.
- U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1964 in Griffin v. School board of Prince Edward County that the public schools be reopened.
- Desegregation cases continued to be held in Virginia for nearly 10 years. The final case was dismissed in 2001.

Brown @ 50



- General Assembly directed MLK Commission to organize and lead Virginia's commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Brown.
- Results of commemoration included Ecumenical Service, served as host of the Congressional Committee on the 50th Anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education, collaboration with other states, publications and speeches, construction of the Civil Rights Monument, and legislation establishing the Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Committee and Fund.

Brown Scholarship Program



- Created in 2004 in the legislative branch.
- Originally funded at \$50,000 (GF); \$1 million donated by benefactor on the condition that the State matched the gift; State matched the gift; benefactor's gift actually received in 2008.
- Purpose of program to “restore” education to persons denied a public education during Massive Resistance between 1954 and 1964.
- Program is governed by §§ 30-231.1 through 30-231.8, and §§ 2.2-3705.4 and 2.2-3711.

Brown Scholarship Program



- **How funds may be used:**

- Transitional education programs to prepare for success in GED and adult education programs
- General Education Development (GED) certificate
- Career or technical education or training
- College Level Examination Program (CLEP) credit
- Undergraduate degree
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree
- Professional degree

Awards for degree programs must be used at accredited two-year and four-year public or private Virginia institutions of higher education

Brown Scholarship Program



- **Who Is Eligible to Participate**

- Current domiciled resident of the Commonwealth who was a student in the public schools of Arlington, Charlottesville, Norfolk, Prince Edward County, or Warren County when public schools were closed to avoid desegregation.
- A student who was unable to begin, continue, or complete his education during that time
- A student relocated within or outside of the Commonwealth to begin, continue, or complete his education
- A student who was ineligible to attend a private academy or foundation, in –or-out-of-state established to circumvent desegregation
- A student who was unable to pursue postsecondary education opportunities or training because of the inability to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalency

Brown Scholarship Program



- **How Long Can the Scholarship Be Used**
 - Full-time or part-time for no more than the maximum number of credit hours required to complete certification or degree program requirements
 - Full-time or part-time for no more than one year of study for transitional education, adult education diploma, GED, CLEP
 - Awards may be used for tuition, fees, textbooks, certain course-related materials, and to support thesis and dissertation research and publication
 - Scholarships can be renewed annually if the student maintains satisfactory academic performance
 - Excess funds must be returned to the Commission by the educational program or institution of higher education

Brown Scholarship Program



- **Education Programs That Qualify**
 - Approved transitional education programs
 - Career and technical education programs
 - GED and CLEP programs
 - Adult Basic Education Programs offered by Virginia public schools
 - Comprehensive Virginia community college programs
 - Two-year and four-year undergraduate degree programs and accredited Virginia public and private institutions of higher education, including online programs
 - Certain recognized five-year undergraduate degree programs
 - Master's, doctoral, and professional degree programs

Brown Scholarship Program



- Educational Programs That Do Not Qualify
 - Theological Schools and Seminaries
 - Private for-profit career and technical education schools
 - Out-of-state schools, including those with campuses in Virginia
 - Out-of-state schools' online programs
 - Correspondence schools
 - Unaccredited programs and institutions of higher education

Brown Scholarship Program



- **Entitlement and Legacy Awards**
 - Virginia law establishing the Brown Scholarship Program does not create, grant, or extend any legally enforceable right or entitlement on the part of any person or to participate in the Program
 - Virginia's Constitution does not guarantee the right to higher education
 - Federal and state laws prohibit the verification of familial relationship, i.e. HIPAA, Social Security, FOIA, FERPA, Immigration laws
 - Awards granted persons but unused are not carried forward
 - Persons who were “directly” affected by Massive Resistance may apply for the award regardless of race, gender, or the locality in which they currently reside
 - Descendants and relatives of affected persons are ineligible to participate in the Program
 - Affected persons who live out-of-state are ineligible to participate in the Program
 - Regular informational and training sessions are held across the Commonwealth to inform prospective applicants and institutions concerning the Brown Scholarship Program