



Raintree
FREESTYLE

On the Front Line

STRUGGLING FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

Stephanie Fitzgerald

SCHOOL DAYS

Fighting injustice

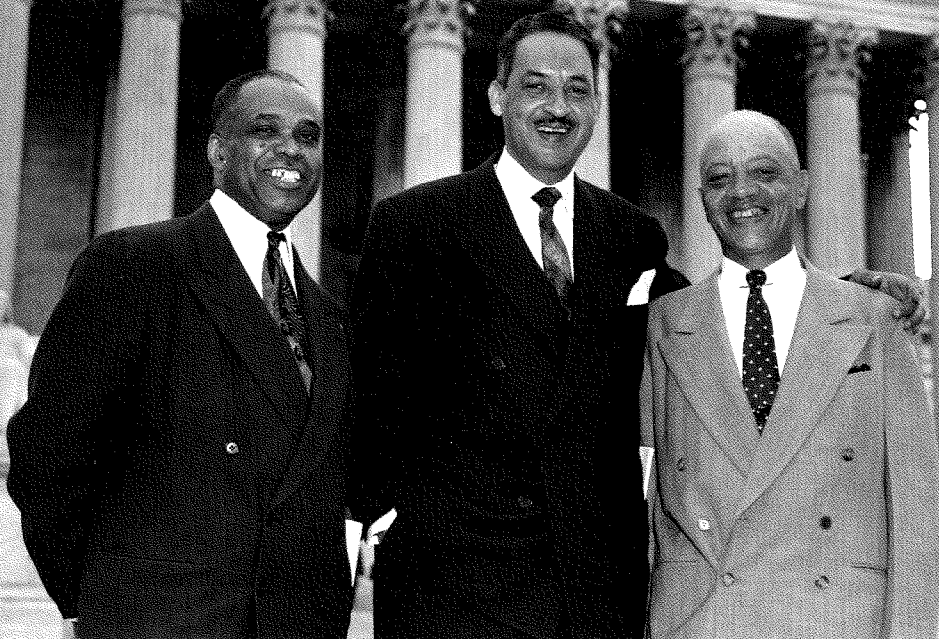
The National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) was formed in 1909 to fight for racial equality. Since its beginnings, the NAACP has used the court system to fight injustice and promote civil rights.

Segregation was not limited to buses. Black people also faced unfair treatment in schools. School segregation was widely accepted throughout the United States, but was required by law in some southern states. White children always had better schools and books than black children. Black parents went to court to try to **desegregate** the schools, but they were not successful.

Fighting through the courts

Thurgood Marshall was a lawyer for the NAACP. In 1954, he decided to combine all of the school desegregation cases into one. The case was called *Brown v the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. Before the trial started, **psychologists** Kenneth and Mamie Clark studied black school children.

In 1954, George Hayes (left) Thurgood Marshall (middle) and James Nabrit (right) argued in court against segregation, and won.



Word Bank

activists people who actively support something
appeal when a court case is taken to a higher court to be heard again

The “doll study”

The Clarks wanted to find out how segregation made black children feel. The psychologists showed the children black and white dolls and drawings. Then they asked which they liked better. The children often picked the white doll or drawing. The psychologists found that even young children knew that being black meant they were of less value in American society.

Separate is not equal

After several losses and many appeals, the *Brown* case went before the United States Supreme Court. The results of the doll study helped the judges make their decision. They all agreed that “separate but equal” was **unconstitutional**. They said there was no way that something separate could ever really be equal. Segregated schools were ordered to bring black and white children together.



Non-violent protests

In 1957, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was formed to co-ordinate the efforts of civil rights activists. The NAACP used the legal system to improve civil rights. The SCLC, led by Martin Luther King Jr, on the other hand, organized non-violent protests and demonstrations.

Even after the courts ordered desegregation, some white schools refused to let black pupils in. These children were turned away from a white school every day for two years between 1954 and 1956.

desegregate stop keeping black people and white people apart
unconstitutional not in agreement with the United States Constitution