

# The Brown Quarterly

Quarterly Newsletter for Classroom Teachers

Volume 6 No. 2

50th Anniversary Issue

Spring 2004

## May 17 Grand Opening of National Historic Site **Brown v. Board of Education**

**M**onroe Elementary School, now the *Brown v. Board* National Historic Site, is an imposing, yet simple brick structure on the corner of 15th and Monroe streets in Topeka, Kansas. It is typical of many early 20th century school buildings. Yet it holds a special place in history. Here the National Park Service commemorates one of the most influential decisions rendered by the U.S. Supreme Court. *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 made racial segregation illegal in the nation's schools and launched the modern civil rights movement.

Monroe Elementary School was one of the segregated schools that African American children were forced to attend after being refused admission to neighborhood schools for whites. It symbolizes the value society places on education, the struggle of African American families to secure educational opportunities for their children, and the realities of racial discrimination under a segregated system.

This building is actually the third Monroe school at this site. The first school, started in 1868, was located in a small rented building until a permanent structure was erected in 1874. The current building was constructed in 1926. Designed by the prominent Topeka architect Thomas W. Williamson, whose firm was hired by the Topeka Board of Education to design a series of progressive schools, Monroe School is a two-story brick and limestone built in the Italian Renaissance Revival style.

Monroe was the newest of four segregated schools serving the African American community. The other schools were Buchanan, McKinley and Washington. Washington no longer stands, and the Board of Education no longer owns the remaining schools.

Monroe originally had 13 kindergarten through eighth grade classrooms until 1941 when the three upper grades were transferred to integrated junior high schools. The Manual Training Room was later used as a lunchroom, and two classrooms were converted for music and visual education. The playground across the street was used for older students to play softball, baseball, track and football. The younger children used playgrounds at the ends of the building.

Monroe School was closed in 1975 due to declining enrollment, and the school district used the building as a warehouse. Eventually it was sold and remained in private ownership 15 years. Plans to convert the school to offices or a private school ended when it was sold to a church in 1982 and was used for a community outreach program. Mark A. Steuve, purchased the school in 1988 to use as a warehouse. Two years later, Steuve announced his intention to sell the building at auction (*see pg 8*).



*Students at Monroe Elementary School, circa 1890s. Photo courtesy of Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries.*

**NHS Grand Opening**  
**15th & Monroe**  
**Topeka, Kansas**

**May 17**  
**11 a.m.**

*Commemorate  
a national  
milestone!*



**For additional visitor information,  
see [www.nps.gov/brvb](http://www.nps.gov/brvb) or call 785-354-1489.**

# A Personal Perspective

*Fifty years of change, fifty years of progress. How near, how far the destination?  
Appropriately, the commemoration serves as a focal point for rededication  
to the concept of basic human rights for all people.*

By their nature, anniversaries evoke mixed feelings. Those who can remember the original event will likely experience it on an emotional level, whereas those who cannot remember will experience it in an intellectual/historical context. This is not to suggest that one context is superior to the other — each has its own value — but there is no question that the emotional is the more powerful motivator.

I am among those for whom *Brown* was and still is an emotional experience. As a child born in 1929, I attended an all-white grade school in Wichita. But from time to time, my neighborhood playmates became otherwise occupied — when black dignitaries (in town for the somewhat controversial “Institute for International Relations”) were staying at our home.

Despite this somewhat contradictory childhood environment — and perhaps even because of it — my parents’ influence created and reinforced a strong personal philosophy that embraced an unequivocal commitment to human rights. My father was business manager at a small Quaker college. In the early 1940s, I found I had more in common with the socially active college students than with my junior high peers. Few men were left on campus during World War II, but one (rumored to be 4F) led a group of 12 to 15 young people comprising a couple of black students (one from Nigeria, one local), two Nisei (Japanese-Americans brought from the relocation camps to attend college), an assortment of Caucasian students, and me. We would proceed to local eateries during the dinner hour, take a seat, and take our cue from the management.

Sometimes managers and servers refused to acknowledge our presence. Most often, we were told that they would not serve the blacks. So we simply all filed out. We always responded politely, but our numbers assured us the attention of the clientele. Had we not been blessed with the youthful conviction of invincibility, we could easily have succumbed to futility. But we persisted, and we would see our “sit-in” method become widely utilized 20 years later in numbers that brought about effective changes in a system that we, with our limitations, could not even dent.

Not until high school did I have any black classmates. Even then, the cultural milieu kept us effectively segregated, so I didn’t really have an opportunity to make friends across racial lines at school. It was my loss; it was not until 40 years after graduation that I had a chance to visit with classmate Dorothy Jenkins, whose daughter, Lynette Woodward, would subsequently make basketball history. Other classmates, black and white, distinguished themselves in various fields; the white ones I knew, the black ones I knew only on sight.

For me, the decision in *Brown v. Board* felt like a personal victory as well as a national humanitarian and cultural one. Like so many, I imbued it with more power than it proved to have, but the failure of people to immediately embrace its spirit (which we should have anticipated) in no way diminishes its significance.

Now, as then, I deplore our fragmented approach to the matter of human rights. Equality of rights is an absolute in the sense that no degrees are possible; no one is equal unless and until each of us is. In retrospect, then, it would appear to have been more efficient to have united the efforts of those who have sought equality on behalf of various categories of people. However, there were (and still are) pragmatic complications to this approach.

For one thing, the problem was perhaps too large to be successfully enjoined as a single encounter. For another, significant humanitarian issues are often resolved largely by grass-roots groups that rise up, poorly organized and inefficient, but with potent emotional power directed toward one narrow goal that may be only a part of the total solution. On the other hand, intellectual issues are generally championed by well-organized groups, “properly” structured from the top down to function efficiently. But they often lack the motivational punch to effect much change.

## Reflections on *Brown v. Board*



by  
Eleanor Bell

The Brown Foundation is pleased to publish this newsletter for classroom teachers through which we will share resources available from national parks and museums. Established to maintain the legacy of the *Brown* decision, our organization plays an exciting role as a park partner. In 1990 we were instrumental in developing *Brown v. Board of Education* National Historic Site in Topeka, Kansas. We hope you enjoy the *Brown Quarterly* and we eagerly anticipate your comments.

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**NAACP Legal Defense Team**

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William T. Coleman  
Jack Greenberg  
Thurgood Marshall  
William H. Hastie  
George E. C. Hayes  
Charles Hamilton Houston  
James M. Nabrit, Jr.  
Frank D. Reeves  
U. Simpson Tate  
Franklin H. Williams

**Delaware Case**

Louis L. Redding

**Kansas Case**

Charles Bledsoe  
Charles Scott  
John Scott

**Virginia Case**

Oliver Hill  
Spottswood W. Robinson, III

**Washington, D.C.**

Charles H. Houston  
James M. Nabrit, Jr.

**South Carolina Case**

Harold Boulware  
Thurgood Marshall

**Community Activists**

McKinley L. Burnett - Kansas  
Gardner Bishop - D.C.  
Rev. J.A. DeLane - S. Carolina  
Rev. Francis Griffin - Virginia

## Thurgood Marshall - 1908-1993

### Crusader for Justice

Whenever the future lawyer, judge and Supreme Court justice got in trouble for talking in class or playing pranks, the principal pulled him out of class and ordered him to study the Constitution. What impressed the black teenager about the Constitution was its guarantee of equal rights to all Americans — with no regard to whether they are men or women, and with no special treatment for any race or religious group ... Reading the Constitution set young Thurgood Marshall on the path to becoming a lawyer. “Before I left that [high] school,” he said, “I knew the whole thing by heart.”

~ from “Due Process”

by Juan Williams in *Footsteps* 3/4 2003

(Photo on right): Thurgood Marshall as a teenager



Marshall's fearlessness, however, often landed him in trouble as a young boy. The grandson of enslaved people, Marshall displayed courage very early in life in changing what was not right to him. The bold step of changing his first name, Thoroughgood, to a shorter, more writer-friendly version was not the only time Marshall saw a way to improve his situation ... Once, after playing a particularly bad prank in high school, the principal sent Marshall to the basement and told him to read and memorize the U.S. Constitution. It took Marshall about 30 minutes to read the document, and then he proceeded to memorize portions of it. Studying the preamble and the articles of the Constitution familiarized Marshall with government structure. He learned, for example, that the Supreme Court, on which he would one day serve, was organized in 1790. He studied the Bill of Rights and the list of citizen rights and privileges. After studying the document, Marshall became keenly aware that African Americans were not able to enjoy the benefits that the Constitution said were their legal right.

~ from “The Best Punishment”

by Dianne Swann-Wright in *Footsteps* 3/4 2003



Thurgood Marshall (left), conferring with Donald Murray and Charles Hamilton Houston, became director-counsel of the N.A.A.C.P. Legal Defense Fund, Inc. Marshall argued the *Brown v. Board* case before the U.S. Supreme Court.

### A Personal Perspective *(continued from page 2)*

Although I normally avoid stirring ashes of a dead past, I do so here in a search for embers to ignite new fires of enthusiasm for the cause of human rights. I would hope that the new fires would be more energy efficient than those of the past, but the long-term goal is indisputably worth whatever expenditure of resources is necessary for its realization.

From this orientation, I contend that the most critical task for the *Brown* commemoration is the creation of an emotional significance for those who did not experience the original event. If we can succeed in accomplishing this goal, the anniversary observance will focus the spirit of the decision toward the ultimate achievement of equality of rights for all of humanity.

Revised from an editorial in the *Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Topeka* in 1979.



# Remembering Lucinda Todd

*The Initiating Plaintiff in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka , May 17, 1954)*

By Rev. Michael F. Blevins, J.D., M. Div., Copyright (All Rights Reserved) March 2004

*We often wonder if our lives have meaning and impact in a world such as ours.  
I knew a person who beautifully demonstrated that the answer is "Yes."*

**L**ucinda (“Cindy”) Wilson Todd (1903-1996) was my fifth grade teacher in the 1964-1965 school term at Central Park Elementary School in Topeka, Kansas. I remember her as a stunningly graceful, wise and winsome lady — a warm, loving, disciplined teacher, who loved books and brilliantly instilled in her students a passion for reading and all things cultural. Mrs. Todd was a dedicated member of the ranks of that too-little-appreciated cadre of world changers: the public school teacher.

Mrs. Todd was a devoted wife, mother and community person — a woman of deep and broad faith. She believed God was a force of hope, love and justice. She was a lifetime active member of St. John’s A.M.E. church in Topeka. Her love for her daughter Nancy was the cause for her inadvertently stepping into legal and cultural history.

For several years, especially from 1948 through 1950, local NAACP President McKinley Burnett had led the local effort to confront the inequities of segregation. He had gone before Superintendent Kenneth McFarland and the Topeka School Board continuously for several years to seek integration of the elementary schools (the secondary schools were not formally segregated by this time) — each time to no avail.

One wintry morning in 1950, Mrs. Todd looked out and saw that as her daughter Nancy tried to catch up with the bus that would take her a few miles to her all-black grade school (when the nearest white elementary school was less than three blocks away) — she very nearly was run over. This was the “last straw” for Lucinda Todd. The frustration and anger came on top of the ire she felt that her daughter could not participate in the public school music programs — because they were not allowed for black students.

Mrs. Todd was livid (“red hot,” in her words) — and consequently marched “kicking and fussing” to see McKinley Burnett and insisted that busing to enforce segregation was no longer acceptable. Waiting was no longer an option. A tipping point had been reached.

A decision was then made by the Topeka NAACP chapter to give the Topeka African American law firm of Scott and Scott the go-ahead to prepare litigation with the assistance of the national NAACP. Mrs. Todd, who was Secretary of the local NAACP, wrote an important letter on August 25, 1950, to Walter White of the New York office of the NAACP, asking for their commitment, which was given in due course. Walter White later was an overnight guest of Mrs. Todd and her husband Alvin.

Strategic planning meetings for the groundbreaking lawsuit occurred in Mrs. Todd’s home on Jewell Street in Topeka,

around her modest dining room table. Attorneys Robert Carter, Jack Greenburg and Thurgood Marshall were guests in her home. Elisha Scott, his sons Charles and John Scott, and Charles Bledsoe — all graduates of Topeka’s Washburn Law School — were the local attorneys for the plaintiffs.

The legal team of Elisha, Charles and John Scott and Charles Bledsoe with the assistance of Robert Carter, drafted a Petition averring that racially separate education was *inherently* unequal and therefore unconstitutional as a violation of the 14th Amendment’s Equal Protection Clause. They filed the case in the United States Courthouse at 5<sup>th</sup> and Kansas (a building which yet serves as Topeka’s main Post Office) in Topeka on February 28, 1951. Lucinda Todd doubted that the suit would be successful, but believed it had to be filed nevertheless, because it was the right thing to do.

There were 13 named plaintiffs (on behalf of their 20 children), because it was the strategy of the team to have broad support with a diversity of African American plaintiffs, and it appears that Oliver Brown was named first on the list by gender assignment, since there was another plaintiff, Mrs. Darlene Brown whose name would have preceded his alphabetically. All the plaintiffs were courageous to step into the limelight of this intense legal and cultural battle.

It was Mrs. Todd who was first to volunteer, took the lead in talking to other parents (mothers chiefly) to convince them to join in the suit as plaintiffs against the school board. It was Mrs. Todd who took the responsibility for the door-to-door campaign



*Lucinda Todd's 5th grade at Central Park Elementary in 1964-65.  
Michael Blevins is the second student from the left on the front row.*

(on foot — she did not drive) to obtain 1500 petition signatures (the NAACP required this as a show of sufficient support). I believe Mrs. Todd took the brunt of the heat for “rocking the boat” — from both the white and black communities. The NAACP did *not* have the support of most of the Topeka Black community, because of fears of recrimination and loss of the status quo. It was Mrs. Todd who took the lead in keeping other participants motivated.

***It was Mrs. Todd who took the responsibility for the door-to-door campaign (on foot -- she did not drive) to obtain 1500 petition signatures the NAACP required . . .***

**O**n May 17, 2004, we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Court's historic decision holding that public schools must be desegregated, because separate is indeed inherently, on its face, unequal, and therefore unconstitutional. I believe that if in our history women had not been so oppressed, the title of the suit would have been as it should have been: *Lucinda Todd et. al. v. Board of Education of Topeka et. al.*

Lucinda Todd died in 1996 in Topeka at the age of 93. Her daughter Nancy Todd Noches is now a retired music teacher residing in Austin, Texas.

Lucinda Todd is an unsung hero whose story should be widely told and emulated. She did not want attention. She did not seek to make history — but with the help of others she did anyway. She was a woman of faith who did the right thing at the right time with courage, against the odds, and in the process changed our world—for the better—forever. The case she made sure was filed is widely regarded as the most important constitutional case in United States history. African Americans felt real hope for the first time that the days of Jim Crow were numbered. And white supremacy felt its first real fear.

I am grateful to have known this wonderful woman who did not let racism, sexism or cynicism deter her. Bravely confronting systemic injustice is a crucial calling for our time. In causes larger than ourselves, we find meaning.

Thank you Mrs. Todd. Thank you to all the plaintiffs and all those who stepped forward with you with courage. Thank you for everything. As we stand on your shoulders, I find myself still tugging, Mrs. Todd, at your wise, kind sleeves.

*Rev. Michael F. Blevins, J.D., M. Div., is Pastor of Tigard Covenant Church, Tigard, Oregon.*



**Lucinda Todd**

### ***From Barbara Johns — Scene 7 of Now Let Me Fly (See next page)***

I'm embarrassed that I go to school in tar paper shacks and when it rains I have to open an umbrella so the leaks from the roof won't make the ink run on my paper ... I'm embarrassed that our water fountains are broken and our wash basins are broken ... But my embarrassment is nothing compared to my hunger. I'm not talking about my hunger for food ... No, I'm hungry for those shiny books they have up at Farmville High. I want the page of the Constitution that is torn out of my social studies book. I want a chance at that "Romeo and Juliet" I've heard about but they tell me I'm not fit to read.

Our teachers say we can fly just as high as anyone else. That's what I want to do. Fly just as high. I said, "Fly." You know, I've been sitting in my embarrassment and my hunger for so long that I forgot about standing up. So, today, I'm going to ask you to stand with me. Before we fly just as high as anyone else, we gotta walk just as proud as anyone else.

And that's what we're going to do! We're gonna walk out of this school and over to the court house. Do you hear me? We're gonna walk with our heads high and go talk to the school board. Are you with me? ... We're gonna walk out in a strike, yes, I said strike, and we won't come back until we get a real school with a gymnasium and library and whole books. And we will get them. And it'll be grand. Are you with me? Are we gonna walk? Are we gonna fly?



*Students in  
Virginia case*

### **Oliver L. Brown Distinguished Visiting Professor for Diversity Issues**

Beginning in 1999, The Brown Foundation, in conjunction with The College of Arts and Sciences at Washburn University, has annually sponsored the Oliver L. Brown Distinguished Visiting Professor for Diversity Issues.

- 2003 - Dr. Robert Schriner, University of Capetown, South Africa
- 2002 - Reverend Charles R. Stith, former ambassador to Tanzania.
- 2001 - Dr. Zvonimir Radeljkovic, Professor of American and English Literature, Sarajevo University.
- 2000 - Dr. Grace Sawyer Jones, President, College of Eastern Utah.
- 1999 - Dr. John Slaughter, Retired President, Occidental College.

## Is the Internet available at your school or public library?

### Learn About the Play *Now Let Me Fly*

Based on hundreds of oral histories and personal interviews, *Now Let Me Fly* brings to life the real stories and real people behind the *Brown v. Board* case. Considered the most important U.S. Supreme Court decision ever, *Brown v. Board* pronounced “Separate But Equal” education illegal and started unraveling the chains of legal segregation.

#### Synopsis

It is 1950 and Thurgood Marshall is exuberant in his enthusiasm to fly in the face of tradition and overthrow the United States Supreme Court doctrine of “Separate But Equal.” But when the ghost of his mentor, Charles Houston, visits him, he is stricken with doubt. Houston takes Marshall on a journey, looking in on the lives and losses of the men and women working in the grassroots struggle against segregation. Together they visit Washington D.C., Virginia, Delaware, South Carolina, and Kansas. They collect the thumbprints of the ordinary people who became activists in all five of the cases that went to the Supreme Court. Together, the thumbprints form a picture of determination, dignity and success. *Now Let Me Fly* is the story of the heroic individuals behind the struggle to end legalized segregation in the United States. To get a feel for the play, see excerpts on page 5 and 7).

Youth versions are at <http://anationacts.brownvboard.org/>

#### The Cast of Characters

When casting, try to match readers to the roles they fit best. However, if the fit isn’t happening, don’t let that stop you! For example, a woman could certainly play Thurgood Marshall. In a middle school reading, Charles Houston can be 13.

#### Character Descriptions

*\* Indicates actual names of people involved at the time.* Two main characters run throughout the play. Many other parts only have 2 or 3 lines. Plus, you will need a person to read stage directions. You can do this play reading with as few as eight people. **Or cast one person per role! That’s 22 people!** See [anationacts.brownvboard.org](http://anationacts.brownvboard.org).

#### Two Largest Roles

Two legal strategists present throughout the play:

- **\* Charles Houston:** African-American law professor, 50s. Dean of the Howard University Law School (a historically black university). Mentor to Thurgood Marshall. Known to his students as “Cement Pants” because he was formal, upright and strict. In the play, he appears as a ghost.
- **\* Thurgood Marshall:** African-American lawyer, 40s. Head of the Legal Defense Fund of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Lead lawyer arguing the *Brown v. Board* case before the Supreme Court. Grand sense of humor, easy-going and smart.

#### A Dozen More Roles

- **\* Cissy Suyat:** Filipino-Hawaiian woman, 20s.
- **\* Gardner Bishop:** African-American barber, 35.
- **Woody:** African-American WWII vet, 30.
- **Eleanor:** White student, 16.
- **\* Barbara Johns:** African-American student, 16.
- **Mrs. Gates:** White secretary.
- **\* Mrs. Sarah Bulah:** African-American egg seller, 40.
- **\* Rev. Kilson:** African-American preacher, 45.
- **\* Rev. J.A. DeLaine:** African-American preacher, 40.
- **Man with Gas Can:** White.
- **\* McKinley Burnett:** African-American carpenter, 50.
- **\* Charles Scott:** African-American lawyer, 30.

#### Other Roles

These characters have 0-5 lines; may be double-cast.

- **Reporter 1, Reporter 2 and Reporter 3**
- **Eleanor’s Father:** White, 40s
- **Congregation Member 1:** African-American.
- **Congregation Member 2:** African-American mother, 30.
- **\* Lucinda Todd:** African-American mother.
- **\* Oliver Brown:** African-American welder, early 30s.
- **\* Matthew Whitehead:** African-American professor, 30s.
- **\* Frederic Wertham:** Jewish psychologist, 50s.
- **\* Louisa Holt:** White psychologist, 30s
- **\* Kenneth Clark:** African-American sociologist, 40.
- **\* Silas Fleming:** African-American father, 30s.
- **\* James Nabrit:** African-American lawyer, 30s.
- **\* Chief Justice Earl Warren:** White judge, 60s.
- **NAACP Staff 1, NAACP Staff 2 and NAACP Staff 3.**
- **Voice/Voices:** unseen; single male voice; chorus of voices.



# Teacher Talk

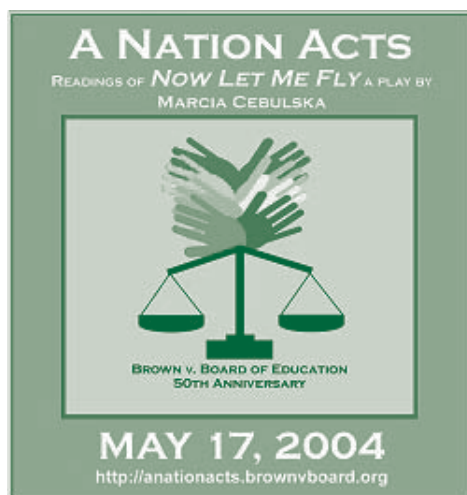
Take part in **A NATION ACTS:** A play reading of *Now Let Me Fly*

**O**n May 17th, 2004, join thousands of others in schools across the country in readings of *Now Let Me Fly* by Marcia Cebulka. This inspiring play is based on the real people involved in the struggle leading to *Brown v. Board*.

With the leadership of Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP, *Brown v. Board* jump-started the civil rights movement by overturning "Separate But Equal." Years before that landmark court case, brave citizens held grassroots meetings across the nation in homes, schools, church basements and barbershops. In honor of their courage, A NATION ACTS will take us again to our community meeting places, this time for an uplifting play that brings to life the unsung heroic individuals who set the stage for legal action.

Join in this exciting theatrical act of unity. Open hearts and minds, bringing the issues of race, education and equality to the forefront of the national dialogue.

Everything you need to plan your reading is available at <http://anationacts.brownvboard.org>. This site provides a step-by-step guide to organizing a successful reading and the script of *Now Let Me Fly*. A youth and an elementary (YY) version are available.



"Are you with me? Are we gonna walk? Are we gonna fly?"

**Barbara Johns — Scene 7**

"We got some grassroots people getting together to gripe. It doesn't change the law. What does it have to do with me?"

**Thurgood Marshall — Scene 6**

"A little less 'mad' and a little more 'do.'" **Gardner Bishop — Scene 5**

"Isn't that what we are sayin' when we quiet about this? I ain't gonna say it no more. God did not make the Negro child out of a cheaper cloth."

**Sarah Bulah — Scene 9**

"And there is no equality in enforced separatism and there is no freedom in racism."

**Reverend J.A. DeLaine — Scene 11**

"The train is moving with or without you."

**Charles Houston — Scene 13**

"We'll keep trying till we get it right. We'll keep trying till we get our rights."

**McKinley Burnett — Scene 13**

"The only way to reach the light is to start our children together in their infancy and they come up together."

**Silas Fleming — Scene 13**

**Sarah Bulah:** He wants me to go all the way for complete integration of our public schools here in Hockessin.

**Rev. Kilson:** Pardon me?

**Sarah Bulah:** He's got a case in Wilmington too. We're goin' for the whole state of Delaware.

**Rev. Kilson:** Mrs. Bulah!

**Sarah Bulah:** And the whole United States of America where we all supposed to be created equal. It's what Mrs. Dyson teach in that little run-down school tho' I don't see how she can make much of a case, lookin' at the white school sittin' across from the country club . . .

**Rev. Kilson:** The law of the land, Mrs. Bulah, is "Separate But Equal."

**Sarah Bulah:** I sees lots of separates but not much equals. We know that ain't workin'. Mr. Redding he say we got a fightin' chance and I just need to sign a letter which he was so kind to put together in the proper—he call it "legalese." Here, I brought it with me so you could sign it, too . . .

*Now Let Me Fly* is the sole property of playwright Marcia Cebulka and is protected by copyright. No changes may be made to the script. *Now Let Me Fly* may be presented in the form of a dramatic reading only. Any other form of presentation, including a fully realized production, requires the written permission of the playwright. No profit may be made and no proceeds may accrue to the presenters.

# Brown v. Board NHS

## Grand Opening and 50th Anniversary

The Brown Foundation began a crusade to save Monroe Elementary School. After a series of letter writing campaigns and meetings with area Congressional leadership, the property was purchased and added to the National Historic Landmark nomination for Sumner Elementary School. In 1992, legislation was signed establishing *Brown v. Board of Education* National Historic Site. The title was transferred to the National Park Service the next year.

As a symbol of the struggle for equal educational opportunity, the site provides a historical setting for learning about *Brown v. Board*. But this is not the only place where the story can be told, since there were many segregated schools throughout the country, and countless parents who disliked the segregated system and wanted something better for their children.



### Opening Night

*"Now Let Me Fly"*

May 17, 2004

7 pm Monday

**Topeka Performing Arts Center**  
Free admission

At 7 p.m. Monday, May 17, the play *Now Let Me Fly* by Marcia Cebulski will be performed at the Topeka Performing Arts Center. Or join thousands of others in communities and schools for play readings across the country that day (see page 5). The play, based on real people involved in the struggle leading to the Supreme Court decision, can be downloaded at:

<http://anationacts.brownvboard.org/>

For additional visitor information, see [www.nps.gov/bryb](http://www.nps.gov/bryb) or call 785-354-1489.

On May 17, 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that segregation in public schools was inherently unequal. This landmark decision launched the modern day Civil Rights movement.

The Grand Opening of *Brown v. Board of Education* National Historic Site and 50th anniversary celebration begins at 11 a.m. May 17 at 1515 S.E. Monroe in Topeka. Featured will be The Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth, The Sixteenth Street Baptist Choir, and other national dignitaries who played a part in this movement.

The event and site visits are free to the public. More than 1,000 people and 800 media representatives are anticipated at the Grand Opening.

*NPS Photo: Girls meet at the Fort Myer, Va., elementary school after the Brown decision.*

For information on African, Hispanic, Asian, Native American history, see past issues of the Brown Quarterly at:

**[brownvboard.org](http://brownvboard.org)**

E-Mail: [brownfound@juno.com](mailto:brownfound@juno.com)

Web: <http://brownvboard.org>