



San Francisco Chronicle

(California)

May 18, 1954

Equal Rights Are for All

The statement of the nine justices expresses the modern American conscience....

In a single sentence a social revolution has been prepared. Although we believe that, in spite of some of the furor that has surrounded this controversy, it will be a quiet and orderly revolution, the change will not come overnight....

Great as the impact of the anti-segregation holding will be upon the States of the South in their struggle to make the physical and intellectual adjustment which it requires, still greater, we believe, will be its impact in South America, Africa and Asia...to the vast majority of the peoples of the world who have colored skins, it will come as a blinding flash of light and hope.

Amsterdam News

(New York, New York)

May 22, 1954

The Job Before Us Now

Last week, the United States Supreme Court held unanimously that segregation in the public schools must go. While that decision becomes the law of our land, and will have more far-reaching effects on all of our people than any other action since the Emancipation Proclamation, we should bear in mind that what happened in Washington on May 17, 1954, did not eliminate all of the barriers to first-class citizenship for Negroes.

It did mark the beginning of an all-out fight to erase the practice of legal segregation from the entire American scene.

Charleston News and Courier

(South Carolina)

May 18, 1954

The Court's Decision

In depriving the states of the right to administer public schools according to their own regional customs, the Supreme Court has cut deep into the sinews of the Republic.

While the court decision drove another nail into the coffin of states rights, it may have the effect of throwing a national issue into local school districts for individual solution. Thus, instead of centralizing public education, the court decree may result, at least for a time, in greater emphasis than ever on local administration.

In most parts of the South, whites and Negroes live in harmony. We do not look for rupture of this harmony as a result of the court's decision.

Denver Post (Colorado)

May 18, 1954

Bridging the Gulf Between the Races

Some barriers still remain. They too will fall in time. The greatest damage that could be done the Negro cause would be to attempt to tumble all barriers at once, before a public attitude of racial tolerance had been properly cultivated.

New York Times (New York)

May 18, 1954

All God's Chillun

[T]he court is not talking of that sort of "equality" which produces interracial marriages. It is not talking of a social system at all...

This nation is often criticized for its treatment of racial minorities, and particularly of the Negro. There have been grounds for this criticism. Little by little, however, in the folk customs and in such decisions as the one rendered yesterday, we move toward a more perfect democracy. When some hostile propagandist rises in Moscow or Peiping to accuse us of being a class society we can if we wish recite the courageous words of yesterday's opinion. The highest court in the land, the guardian of our national conscience, has reaffirmed its faith – and the undying American faith – in the equality of all men and all children before the law.

Louisville Courier-Journal

(Kentucky)

May 18, 1954

The Supreme Court's ruling is not itself a revolution. It is rather acceptance of a process that has been going on a long time – people everywhere could well match the court's moderation and caution.

The Chattanooga Times

(Tennessee)

May 18, 1954

If Governor Talmadge of Georgia and Governor Byrnes of South Carolina attempt to abolish the public school systems as they

have threatened to do they will meet opposition among their own people...the Times believes that most of the Southern states will meet this situation calmly, reassured in the knowledge that we shall have time to make adjustments.

Chicago Defender (Illinois)
May 18, 1954

End of the Dual Society

Neither the atom bomb nor the hydrogen bomb will ever be as meaningful to our democracy as the unanimous decision of the Supreme Court of the United States that racial segregation violates the spirit and letter of our Constitution. This means the beginning of the end of the dual society in American life and the...segregation which supported it.

Daily News
(Starkville, Mississippi)
May 18, 1954

Bloodstains on White Marble Steps

Human blood may stain Southern soil in many places because of this decision but the dark red stains of that blood will be on the marble steps of the United States Supreme Court building.

White and Negro children in the same schools will lead to miscegenation. Miscegenation leads to mixed marriages and mixed marriages lead to the mongrelization of the human race.

The Des Moines Register (Iowa)
May 18, 1954

Let no one minimize the task that lies ahead for southern communities...But let no one maxi-

mize the difficulties involved in ending segregation.

Segregation has been stopped in a number of localities smoothly and without incident. There is every reason to believe the adjustment to equality in schools will be made in the same pattern.

The Atlanta Constitution
(Georgia)
May 18, 1954

The Supreme Court Has Given Us Time

The court decision does not mean that Negro and white children will go to school together this fall. The court itself provides for a "cooling off" period. Not until next autumn will it even begin to hear arguments from the attorneys general of the 17 states involved on how to implement the ruling.

Meanwhile, it is no time for hasty or ill-considered actions. It is no time to indulge demagogues on either side nor to listen to those who always are ready to incite violence and hate.

It is a time for Georgia to think clearly. Our best minds must be put to work, not to destroy, but to seek out constructive conclusions.

Cavalier Daily
(Charlottesville, Virginia)
May 18, 1954

'Violates' Way of Life

It is too early to tell what effect the Supreme Court decision to abolish segregated schools will have on the South.

Although it is hard from a strict legal point of view to justify any action contrary to the law, we feel that the people of the South are justified in their bitterness concerning this decision.

To many people, this decision is contrary to a way of life and violates the way in which they have thought since 1619.

Pittsburgh Courier
(Pennsylvania)
May 18, 1954

Orchids to the NAACP

Opposed by some of the greatest legal minds in the nation, the NAACP legal battery roundly defeated them decisively with a mobilization of talent, facts and scientific opinion seldom surpassed in our history.

It is significant that the Supreme Court's decision was, in our view, based less on law than social philosophy, and it was this latter argument that the NAACP lawyers stressed so magnificently in their arguments, although of course, the usual constitutional appeals were made.

Chicago Tribune (Illinois)
May 18, 1954

A Simple Principle

The fact that the court was unanimous in the cases decided yesterday should help a good deal to discourage resistance to the finding or attempts to evade its plain meaning for it is not likely that a unanimous court will change its mind.

The principle established by this decision is...that the state governments, North and South, must regard all men as created equal so far as opportunities at the disposal of the state are concerned.