

Latrelle McAllister

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Latrelle McAllister is an African-American woman who attended West Charlotte High School from 1973 until 1976, during the first years of integration. She speaks about her experiences of both segregated and integrated schools during her interview, and compares and contrasts the two types of schools.

Audio

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Duration: 2:37

Transcript:

Audio Transcript

However, one of the things that I think is important, though, is that students do have the opportunity to have exposure to cultures outside their own. You know, I work in human resources and a lot of the issues that I see in my job come from cultural clashes. Not necessarily racial clashes, but cultural clashes. I was brought up differently from you and so I see things differently than you. I approach problems differently. I communicate differently. I think that integrated situations are beneficial to African-American children because it gives them the opportunity to develop those skills that they'll need as they work and live in the society at large.

So, I think that there are some benefits to integration, although, I'm not sure that — you know, my husband and I have chosen not to put our child on the bus. We take him to school. But there are children who have to get up as early as 5:15 and do that. And for those parents who aren't able to get their children to school in any other way, I imagine that is a concern for them. So, from a humanistic standpoint I really don't advocate children having to get up that early and have maybe three, four hours of their day spent on a bus. I think that there are a lot of bright minds in the education community and I think there are some ways to come together and partner to solve those problems. I think those problems aren't those that are easily attacked.

But, like I said, I just don't know. There's still some debate about the benefits of it. For instance, if in school, especially elementary school, if I got in trouble, if I got in trouble on the way home, or if I got in trouble in the community at large, I could be sure that my mother would know about it or my father would know about it and that something would be done about it. There's not that type of support. There's not that village that we talk about that's important in raising and nurturing and shaping young minds. Perhaps a part of the movement away from busing is the movement toward establishing those villages where we can nurture our children. That's probably not a bad approach. But, I do think that there's value in exposure to other cultures.

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