

North Carolina First Grade Classroom (1973)

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The 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* settled the issue of the unfairness of segregation, but it did not necessarily change the reality of schools segregated by race. In 1965, Darius and Vera Swann took the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district to court for not allowing their son to attend a school that was closer to their home but that was predominantly white in population.

The case eventually made its way to the United States Supreme Court, which decided in favor of the Swanns that Charlotte-Mecklenburg should work swiftly to desegregate its schools. Since it was typical at this time in history for neighborhoods to be racially segregated, it was determined that the best way to desegregate the school system was to bus students from predominantly black neighborhoods to schools in predominantly white neighborhoods, and vice versa.

There were major issues with this plan. Transportation costs went up drastically. School start times had to be adjusted to allow for extra travel time. Disciplinary problems between white and black students increased in many junior and senior high schools.

This photograph shows black and white students in first grade in 1973 sitting side-by-side, where the color of one's skin clearly does not appear to be an issue. As these children went through the public school system, the concept of mixed race classes became a norm for their generation.



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