

# 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Supreme Court Case

Recently, Dr. Janet Sims-Wood, part-time Reference Librarian, applied for a Pathfinder Grant to fund awareness and celebration of a monumental Supreme Court decision, *Brown v Board of Education*. Dr. Sims-Wood tells us a bit of history about the case heard almost 50 years ago:

*May 17, 2004 will mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Brown v. Board of Education decision. This case is considered to be the most important legal case affecting African Americans in the twentieth century and one of the most important Supreme Court decisions in U. S. Constitutional history.*

*Brown v. Board of Education combined separate cases from Kansas, Delaware, Virginia, South Carolina and the District of Columbia. Schools for African Americans were never equal as required in the "separate but equal" doctrine, as most were in overcrowded and run-down tarpaper buildings. Many schools had no indoor heating or plumbing. Bus service was rarely provided and students had to often walk past better-equipped white schools to attend segregated schools. There was little money for books and supplies and African American teachers were on a lower pay scale.*

*The cases were: Brown v. Board of Education for Kansas, Belton v. Gebhart (Bulah v. Gebhart) for Delaware, Briggs v. Elliott for South Carolina, Bolling v. Sharpe for the District of Columbia, and Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County for Virginia.*

*The NAACP decided to challenge segregation in the public schools and took the cases to the Supreme Court. The high court combined the cases into Brown v. Board of Education because each sought relief from segregated schools. After reviewing each case, the Supreme Court ruled that segregated schools were illegal. Speaking on behalf of the Supreme Court, Chief Justice Earl Warren found that "in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place." This decision signaled the end of the legality of segregation.*



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It is important to note that although the decision by Chief Justice Warren ended the "legality of segregation" as it related to public education in 1954, public school segregation continued for some time.

Dr. Sims-Wood recently shared more information about this case. Her presentation was televised February 24 on our community college cable station, Channel 75. A video recording is available in the library.

More information about the pivotal educational court decision can be found in the library and on the Internet. On the next page are several sources you might consider.

**Selected books:**

*Literacy and Racial Justice* LC 2731.P72 2003

*Simple Justice. The history of Brown v Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality* KF 4155.K55 1976

*Landmark Decisions of the United States Supreme Court* KF 4549 .L37 v.1

**Selected video recordings:**

*Simple Justice* KF 4155.S54 1993

*Supreme Court Decisions That Changed the Nation: Brown vs Board of Education* E 185.61.S94

*The Road to Brown* E 185.61.R63 1989

**Selected authoritative web sites:**

Brown v Board of Education 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Home Page  
<http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/brownvboard50th/index.html>

Brown v Board of Education  
<http://brownvboard.org/>

Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site  
<http://www.nps.gov/brvb/>

For more sources on this topic, stop at the Reference Desk for a complete listing of print, video, and electronic sources. Or stop by the Circulation Desk to see the display of newly ordered materials.

**Databases — Off-Campus Access**

Want to access the databases from home? Remote access is here for many of the databases available from the library. With remote access to several of the databases faculty and students can take advantage of this off-campus access opportunity. Faculty can create electronic reading lists for special topics, electronic reserves, and bibliographies for other class assignments. Students can access articles for their research projects.

To access the online databases, go to <http://www.pgcc.edu/library/> and click Online Databases from the left frame. For faculty access from home enter your Novell login name and password. Students will need to create a username and password. Contact Imogene Zachery, Electronics Librarian, at [izachery@pgcc.edu](mailto:izachery@pgcc.edu) or x-0138 for more information.

**Help Us Help Your Students**

We would like to take this opportunity to offer some helpful tips in support of better assisting your students in their future research efforts.

Provide the librarians advance notice of an assignment that will use certain printed sources (send us a copy of the printed assignment)

Contact Norma Schmidt to schedule instructional sessions or other “in-library” class sessions

Inform students when a book or video is available “on reserve” at the Circulation Desk rather than simply “in the library.”

Current course textbooks are generally not available. You may send one to be placed “on reserve.”

**Spreading the Word on Information Literacy**

At the League for Innovation Conference on Information Technology held in Milwaukee October 19-22, Imogene Zachery, Electronics Librarian, was one of the guest presenters. Her presentation entitled, “A Quick Research Library Tutorial: An Information Literacy Tool for the Campus,” addressed information literacy and how the tutorial (developed by Imogene and Norma Schmidt) fulfills the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education and accreditation. Feedback from this presentation indicates that the tutorial (available from the library’s web site) may be modeled by other institutions.



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