

ARLINGTON SCHOOL DESEGREGATION A HISTORY

By

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Introduction

In 1968, the Virginia State Commission on Civil Rights issued a report to the United States Commission in which the counties of Virginia listed, in order, the most important factors in achieving desegregation of the schools. In every case, the primary factor cited was the role of the federal government. Negro leaders felt that school boards would not have been motivated to desegregate had the federal government not required them to do so. For many counties, the threat of losing federal education funds was a critical factor in the desegregation decision.¹

The second major factor cited was the role of local school officials and the community; and the third major factor cited was the role of civil rights groups and the Negro community.²

It is these latter two factors which I will address in this project, as they relate to the desegregation of the Arlington County Public Schools. In many ways the Arlington community conducted its desegregation in a textbook fashion. In this paper, I have attempted to present an account of the events involving the School Board's role, as well as the role of members of the community at the time of desegregation in Arlington in 1959. Further, I have attempted to ascertain why it took twelve years to achieve complete desegregation.

The United States Commission on Civil Rights listed the major contributions made in the communities in which desegregation was accomplished peacefully emphasizing the importance of:

- arranging a variety of activities which involve parents;
- creating an atmosphere of cooperation and comradeship between school and community;
- keeping the community informed and allowing no surprises;
- involving a large committee of black and white volunteers, opponents as well as advocates;
- holding open meetings;
- involving the community and media in a positive manner;
- listening to citizen input and making use of the community leaders in directing the events of desegregation.³

Arlington demonstrated this community involvement in leading the state in the integration of students as well as the integration of its teaching staff.

Lest one get the idea that Arlington was a liberal community which was pushing to integrate, it must be understood that Arlington had its blend of

political philosophies as did the rest of Virginia. In addition, contrary to many counties in Virginia, Arlington's Negro population was a mere five percent, compared with several other more resistant counties, such as Halifax, which had a slight majority of Negro population. The fear of many whites was that the Negroes wanted to "take over" the community. This was, in fact, the time of "Black Power", and fear among whites, especially in southern communities where Negroes outnumbered the whites, was genuine.

Methodology

This project focuses on an historical period in Arlington County — the period of the desegregation of the public schools. I was motivated toward this because of three questions to which I could find no clear answers in the school records:

1. What is the connection between desegregation and the County losing its right to an elected school board?
2. What was it like for the people involved in the desegregation on the first day, February 2, 1959?
3. Why did it take twelve years to move from a desegregated county to a unitary non-racial system?

Historical Setting

Subsequent to World War II numerous newcomers arrived in Arlington, many to begin new careers with the New Deal. Among these people were young families who quickly grew concerned with the caliber of public schools they found in Arlington. At this time, before 1946, the Arlington School Board was appointed by a School Trustee Electoral Board which was appointed by a circuit judge, who had been elected by the State Legislature. In this process the board was effectively removed from responsiveness to the people.⁴

Citizens in Arlington convinced the Virginia General Assembly to hold a special session in May of 1947. The group, which called itself the "Citizens' Committee for School Improvement" (CCSI), took to Richmond with them petitions signed by over 5,000 voters in Arlington, asking for the right to an elected school board which would be more responsive to the citizens to improve the state of the public schools. The Arlington group persuaded the General Assembly, which granted the request. To date, Arlington is the only county in Virginia ever to have had an elected school board.⁵

This new board favored massive school improvements. The old board, wanting to continue the status quo, filed suit challenging the constitutionality

of the decision. In October, 1948, the Virginia Supreme Court upheld the decision favoring the new board.⁶

By 1952 in its Annual Report to the Citizens, the Arlington School Board reported:

“Equal educational opportunities are now available for white and Negro pupils. Special emphasis is placed on teaching the fundamentals of reading, writing, arithmetic and speech. Trained supervisors assist the teachers to help every child reach the highest achievement of which he is capable. Art, music, and physical education are offered for all pupils.”⁷

Benjamin Muse, a reporter and author of perhaps the best account of desegregation in Virginia, describes Arlington County in the fifties:

“Arlington County . . . is often out of time with Virginia policy and was particularly so on the segregation issue. Its people, a cosmopolitan group of relatively high average income, of whom about 5% were Negro, had little patience with the school closing legislation.”⁸

From the moment the Supreme Court voted the Brown Decision on May 17, 1954, the politicians of Virginia began searching for ways to avoid compliance with that decision. When the state-appointed Gray Commission recommended a system of tuition grants for private schools, and further recommended that the matter of desegregation be left to local option, the Arlington Board took them literally.

According to James Stockard, a member of the elected board at that time:

“To us the Gray Commission had signaled local option, so we simply took the position that we would, in an orderly way over a period of three years, phase into desegregated public education in Arlington, and so we voted accordingly on the issue that was really involved more at the time with school construction than anything else.”⁹

Dr. Barnard Joy, also a member of the Board at that time concurs:

“This (the Gray recommendation) came at a critical time as far as we in Arlington were concerned because we needed additional space in our high schools and therefore needed to come up with a bond issue for an additional school or additional high school space . . . The Board, with the Supreme Court decision, could see no point in providing added space at the Hoffman-Boston school (a first through twelfth grade school for Negroes) and felt that the added space justified by the increased high school enrollment of black students should be provided at the other high schools.”¹⁰

Mr. Stockard continues:

“We had to decide whether we were going to further expand those (the Negro schools) buildings, because the black popu-

lation was expanding as well as the white population, or should we begin to phase some of the black children into the white schools. We decided the latter because it seemed to be public policy both of the nation and the state, and we wanted to be in compliance with all the public policy that we knew about.”¹¹

“The news of the Arlington action fell like a thunderbolt on the State of Virginia with consequences the Arlington School Board completely failed to foresee.”¹² In January, 1956, the State legislature met “to consider additional action to meet the new threat to continued segregation in the schools of the Old Dominion.”¹³

James Stockard, representing the School Board and other delegates, went to Richmond. Mr. Stockard recalls:

“One of the neighboring districts of the State, Stafford County, through one of its delegates there (Mr. Moncure), introduced a measure which would have deprived Arlington of its elected School Board and thrown us all the way back to the appointive system . . . (See reference from the *Arlington Historical Magazine* above.) The compromise (given after all speakers were heard) was to allow Arlington to have its School Board members appointed by the governing body of the county, the County Board of Supervisors.”¹⁴

In May of 1956, the NAACP filed suit in federal court demanding desegregation in Arlington, among other districts. Understanding that to ignore a federal decision meant that the County would be under federal orders to desegregate, and to comply meant that the Governor might close Arlington schools in defiance of that order, the citizens acted. Realizing the dilemma of their decision the Arlington Committee to Preserve Public Schools took a formal stand in May, 1958:

- “1. We are determined to pursue every legal means to keep public schools open.
2. We are here concerned neither with perpetuating segregation in schools nor hastening integration.
3. We have faith in Arlington’s ability to meet its public education problems.”¹⁵

The June 12, 1958 meeting of ACPPS saw over 700 people in attendance. By this time they had gained the formal support of many groups including the following:

26 of the 39 white PTA groups
Arlington Council of Churches
League of Women Voters
Council of Church Women
Northern Virginia Sun

Theda Henle, an active member in the Arlington Committee to Preserve

Public Schools and later, one of the organizers of the non-partisan group, Arlingtonians for a Better County (ABC), recalls the philosophy of ACPPS:

“Ours was not a liberal group. It was not a group which wanted to integrate the schools. It was a group — and I think you (speaking to Edmund Campbell) gave us this leadership and you pointed this up for us. This was a group of people who wanted to keep the schools open, who knew what would happen to Virginia if we didn’t have public education, and it included some very conservative people . . . If we had been just integrationists, we would have represented a small minority in the kind of place Virginia was then . . . We put an ad in the NORTHERN VIRGINIA SUN which included an application form . . . We signed up several hundred members from that one ad . . . I am certain Governor Almond knew of our existence — we became a statewide group, and we may have influenced him and influenced other members of the legislature.”¹⁶

William M. Lightsey, long time activist in Arlington and Virginia politics was a tremendous influence of the time. Active in local PTAs, he later became director of Northern Virginia PTA district. He served as a member on the State Board of Management during the Brown decision. He became a full time lobbyist in the Virginia General Assembly. On January 19, 1959, the Virginia General Assembly was called into session by Governor Almond to vote on whether to repeal Virginia’s massive resistance laws. The federal courts were putting pressure on the state that it could not continue to maintain any public school system if it did not maintain a complete public school system. At that time schools had been ordered closed in Norfolk and Charlottesville by the Governor. Mr. Lightsey recalls:

“The thing I remember most is the changed position of Governor Almond who had been originally an active leader in support of the massive resistance philosophy but when the special session of the General Assembly was called, it was the result of Governor Almond having changed his position in support of keeping the public schools open. I had the opportunity of talking with the Governor shortly after the famous 19 to 20 vote in the Senate to repeal the massive resistance . . . The Governor told me, . . . it was not until after the statewide PTA Convention the preceding fall in which an overwhelming vote called on the government to take whatever action was necessary to keep the schools open, that he realized that there was widespread support of that position throughout the state and that the work done by the Committee for Public Schools had resulted in his changed position.”¹⁷

Edmund Campbell, who is interviewing Mr. Lightsey interjects: "I doubt if it is generally realized how very close the Commonwealth of Virginia came to abandoning its entire public school system when the courts declared the massive resistance laws unconstitutional . . . The vote to continue the public school system in the Virginia Senate in 1959 session showed a majority of one — 20 to 19. If it had been the other way, all of the schools, the public schools in Virginia would have been closed and while Bill Lightsey has contributed a lot to the civic, political, and social life of Virginia during this period in Arlington, as far as I am concerned this will always stand as his greatest monument."¹⁸

The Day Nothing Happened

Two weeks to the day following the vote to end massive resistance in Virginia, four seventh grade black students entered Stratford Junior High School. THE WASHINGTON POST billed it the next day as "The Day Nothing Happened." Emotions ran high in the days preceding this integration. Edmund Campbell recalls twenty-five years later at the reunion of the people involved that day:

"If you didn't live in Virginia, it's impossible to imagine the emotions involved. You might have thought the world was coming to an end if the schools were desegregated to hear Virginians talk. They thought it was the Civil War all over again."¹⁹

Dr. Barnard Joy, three times elected, and then later reappointed to the School Board recalls vividly the morning of February 2:

"Very strenuous security steps were taken from the standpoint of the School Board declaring the school off limits for any but the students and staff . . . The school was surrounded by a cordon of police, in uniform, very prominently located, to indicate the desired order should be kept . . . Part of the difficulties occurring at that time with integration was the very wide publicity that these events were creating, and therefore tending to incite difficulties."²⁰

Looking back, twenty-five years later, the four students reflect on that day:

Lance Newman awoke with a stomach ache and threw up.

Michael Jones wondered why he was being separated from his neighborhood friends.

Gloria Thompson believed theirs would be a special role.

Ronald Deskins feared he'd be spat upon or his father's car would be stoned; he didn't want to go.²¹

Theda Henle, community activist and mother of one of the current Stratford students at that time describes that day:

“Our middle son, Jim, was in Stratford. We lived right around the corner and when it became clear that the (black) children were going to go in, I became . . . worried about what that first day would be like for them and their parents. I called Mrs. Hamm . . . She was a prime mover in the black community in integrating the schools and hers was the only name I knew . . . When I called her, she didn’t know who I was and that was a very . . . (pause). I called her to invite the four mothers to come over and spend the day in my house so they could be closer to their children. When I phoned and gave my name and reason I was calling, she started to cry. I was upset, and I said, “I’m sorry — is this a bad time to call? I can call later.” She said, “No, it’s a wonderful time.” She said, “I’ve had two obscene telephone calls today, and when the phone rang, I said, ‘If this is another, I’m going to cancel the phone.’ ” They were so afraid — those four mothers who came, and two or three grandmothers — there were about five or six people altogether . . . The police brought them, the police were outside the house, actually, they only had to protect them from reporters because, if you remember, that was a terrible day; it was a terrible day as far as the weather went; rain and sleet and freezing rain and so the segregationists, who had threatened to make trouble, stayed in their warm houses and didn’t bother us.

You couldn’t see Stratford from our living room, you could only see it from our bedroom. Every once in awhile, one of the mothers would get up and walk back to the bedroom to make sure the school hadn’t been bombed, then she would come back and nod to the others. The four children were brought to our house by the police after they had their school day, and they went home with their parents.”²²

With the integration of Arlington, and also Norfolk on the same day, ninety years of dual education came to a sudden halt. But the saga only begins here. This day saw twenty-one Negro students integrated into previously white schools. But for Arlington, there were still another twelve years of work before Arlington was finally, in 1971, declared a unitary, non-racial school system. The chronology above lists the events as they unfolded, but why did twelve years pass before six percent of a population could be integrated into a school system with less than 25,000 students?

To understand the answer, one must understand the time. To attempt to glean a picture of the community at that time, I spent some time perusing

the NORTHERN VIRGINIA SUN. Repeatedly, I found reports on school board meetings in which discussion on desegregation was postponed for a later date. Desegregation itself, as an issue, seemed to be postponed. There were, of course, individual Negro students integrating individual schools, but not many. In a school memorandum in 1963, enrollment was reported at 26,414 students. Of the thirty-eight elementary schools, twenty were all white and five were all Negro. The junior-senior high school still had only Negro students. Two of the other high schools were integrated while the last one remained segregated. Recall that to be defined as integrated, only one student of a different race needed to be enrolled.²³

In April, 1963, the NORTHERN VIRGINIA SUN ran daily reports concerning integration of the schools. The reports began on April 2, 1963, with two-inch headlines which read SUMMER SCHOOL PLAN SET — TEACHING IS INTEGRATED, followed by a half-inch headline HOFFMAN-BOSTON DECISION POSTPONED. As I read further I learned that the Board had voted unanimously to open summer school teaching to any interested teacher employed in the system, a tremendous breakthrough in segregation. In fact, as reported in the 1967 issue of the Southern Educational Reporting Service, Arlington made Virginia history once again, as the first county in Virginia to desegregate.²⁴ Walt Taylor, principal at Kenmore Intermediate School, recalled:

“I remember that the Virginia Education Association threw Arlington Education Association out of VEA because Arlington desegregated teachers.* In 1966, I believe, blacks were first invited to join VEA, but I wouldn't join for years as a result of their action in 1963.”²⁵

*In fact, AEA was “thrown out” of VEA as a direct result of the merger of the AEA and the ATA (the black teachers organization).

But more than teacher desegregation was on the minds of the Arlington County Board and the community on April 2, 1963. A heated discussion took place concerning the closing of the only Negro high school. Two parents warned of “white flight” if the high schools were integrated fully. Two Negro leaders from the Arlington Council on Human Relations suggested that the small Negro high school should be closed because it did not offer its students the educational opportunities equivalent to those available in the white schools. Other blacks argued that the school should not be closed because “Big is not necessarily good, and small is not necessarily bad.”²⁶

George Lincoln Rockwell, fuehrer of the American Nazi Party in Arlington, along with thirteen of his “storm troopers” attempted to have the School Board members arrested for holding a “mixed” meeting in violation of the Virginia public seating laws. He was unsuccessful in getting his

warrant but the group made their presence felt at that meeting. The Board, that night, voted to postpone the decision for two days and to hold its meeting behind closed doors.²⁷

The next day the two-inch headlines read CIVIC FEDERATION ASKS ACTION — HOFFMAN-BOSTON CLOSING BACKED. In addition, the group praised the decision to open summer school positions to Negroes.²⁸

Finally on April 4, 1963, the decision to close was made, with mixed public opinion. The SUN, that day, reported erroneously that George L. Rockwell was a former member of the School Board. In the same paragraph the SUN stated "There is no longer a majority of segregationists among the Board's five members."²⁹

In an editorial on that same day, the question of the closing being a wise move for Arlington, was posed. In it, Hank Burchard lauded teacher qualities among the Negro junior-senior high school teachers. He noted, for instance, that seventeen of the thirty-eight teachers held master's degrees, ten were in a National Honor Society, four had been listed in WHO'S WHO IN AMERICAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, and six had graduated with highest honors, three summa cum laude, and three cum laude.³⁰

I questioned Walt Taylor about the closing of the senior high school. I asked if he began teaching in one of the other high schools when the integration took place.

He responded:

"I had been teaching in the senior high school at Hoffman-Boston, but I chose to begin teaching in the junior high school there, in order to stay in the fall of 1964 when the senior high actually closed."

I asked why.

"I stayed because I didn't want to teach white kids. I really wanted to teach the black kids and I could do that at Hoffman-Boston."³¹

A picture of resistance comes into clearer focus. A resistance of an appointed school board, citizens, parents from both races, teachers, and students. I felt I needed to focus the picture even sharper. What was the feeling among the Negro students? What do those students remember today? I interviewed one. From Larry Randall's perspective, the broadness and complexity of the times is better understood.

Larry was a seventh grader at the Hoffman-Boston Elementary School when Stratford integrated in 1959. He did not recall much of that but he remembered well the beginning of his eighth grade at Thomas Jefferson Junior High School. His parents thought he should take advantage of the times and the curriculum offered in the larger school. He especially remembered his years at Wakefield High School, when friends encouraged him to

become active in athletics. Larry went on to become "The athlete of the year of 1965," and on to college, later to return to Arlington where he has taught physical education for sixteen years.

I asked Larry if the desegregation of Arlington schools in 1959 was a token desegregation. Without hesitation he responded:

"No, not at all. People, black people, didn't really want to totally integrate. Those who decided to do so, did. Like I did . . . But from 1959, the schools were open for blacks to integrate them.

"You see, there are really three sections of blacks in Arlington . . . Everybody in those sections felt more comfortable about the setting they were in. They felt more secure. We figured we had each other, our school, and teachers. We had pretty much what the white kids had in school, except maybe a little smaller and older — that was all right. There wasn't any choice in 1964 . . ."

I asked Larry if total integration failed to take place in 1959 because the black community did not want to break up its sense of community. His immediate answer:

"Yes, definitely . . . It was different at Hoffman-Boston. It was home. Every one of those teachers knew every student in the building and their families, too. They were like family. They knew you inside-out. You didn't even think to act up because before you got home, your family would already know. There was no such thing as a discipline problem. Those teachers earned the respect of every student and every family."

Larry summed up the sense of integration when he said that it is really a "thinking" in an integrated way that both sides still have a lot of work to do to bring integration around to what it should be.³²

At the beginning of my research, I could not understand why it would take twelve years to integrate 1,200 black students into a system with fewer than 25,000 students. I see the history in a much more realistic setting now. This setting includes a large number of conservatives who resisted change of any kind, and many of these were Negroes. The closeness of the Negro community at that time was like a jewel, expensive to keep, but, for many, too precious to relinquish. And so, even though the choice to integrate existed after February 2, 1959, the choice, for most of the Negro community, was no choice. It would mean a loosening of those valued community ties.

There were some conservatives appointed to the School Board in the fifties and sixties. Bob Peck, considered by most to be among them, recently defended his role on the Board when he explained that he was merely trying

to enforce the laws of Virginia, right or wrong; he felt he had an obligation to do so.³³

Citizens in Arlington have strived for equal opportunity for the children in the public schools. As the schools throughout the county have improved, members of the community have returned to the Board to plead for more of a neighborhood school system, and for a reduction in busing. The Arlington School Board has continued, to this day, (see Chronology) to listen to the community, black and white, and to attempt to modify the busing of students and to relocate the boundaries of the schools in order to help the communities maintain their sense of “neighborhood” and still achieve diversity.

Conclusion

There is no conclusion to desegregation. It has been an ongoing process in the public schools of the seventies and eighties. Arlington proceeded from making Virginia history, to closing its Negro high school, and later its junior high school, to achieving a unitary non-racial system in 1971.

The community leaders, who began in the forties and fifties to improve the school system from mediocre to one of the best in the country, demonstrated great farsightedness. Their foresight is even better appreciated when one begins to read through the dozens of oral histories which have, in fact, originated with Edmund Campbell in the early 1980's. He, along with his wife, Elizabeth, have been front runners in improving Arlington education since the early fifties. Now, in their later years, they understand the importance of leaving a legacy for future generations. Citizens like myself can read these oral histories and gain insight, in a very personal sense, into how Arlington grew, even amid resistance and extreme conservatism.

To study personal accounts of February 2, 1959, desegregation day in Arlington, Virginia — the day the press termed “The Day Nothing Happened” — left me with an admiration for those individuals involved. Few history texts will ever begin to capture the vividness of those oral histories.

Notes and References

*Cecelia Michelotti teaches mathematics at Wakefield High School. This paper was written as part of her Master's Program in the Social Foundations of Education, at the University of Virginia.

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¹United States Commission on Civil Rights: *The Federal Role In School Desegregation In Selected Virginia Districts — A Report of the Virginia State Advisory Committee*, 1968, p. 5.

- ²Ibid. p. 6.
- ³Ibid. pp. 191-96.
- ⁴Arlington Historical Society, *Arlington Historical Magazine*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Oct., 1966), p. 44.
- ⁵Ibid. p. 45.
- ⁶Ibid. p. 46.
- ⁷Arlington, County, *Annual Report*, "Provisions for Education and Recreation. (Arlington, Virginia, 1951-52), p. 37.
- ⁸Benjamin Muse, *Virginia Massive Resistance*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961), p. 5.
- ⁹Oral — Stockard, p. 5.
- ¹⁰Oral — Joy, p. 16.
- ¹¹Oral — Stockard, p. 6.
- ¹²Franklin Owen Felt, *A Study of Non-Partisan Political Organization — The Arlingtonians for a Better County (ABC)*, doctoral thesis. (Michigan: Michigan State University, Department of Political Science, 1961), p. 109.
- ¹³Ibid. p. 110.
- ¹⁴Oral — Stockard, p. 8.
- ¹⁵Muse, op. cit., p. 57.
- ¹⁶Oral — Henle, p. 12.
- ¹⁷Oral — Lightsey, p. 6.
- ¹⁸Ibid. p. 7.
- ¹⁹*Washington Post*, February 1, 1984.
- ²⁰Oral — Joy, p. 20.
- ²¹*Post*, op. cit.
- ²²Oral — Henle, p. 14.
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- ²⁴Southern Educational Reporting Service, *Statistical Summary of School Segregation/Desegregation in the Southern and Border States*, (Nashville, Tennessee, Feb., 1967), p. 38.
- ²⁵Oral — Taylor.
- ²⁶*Northern Virginia Sun*, April 2, 1963, p. 1.
- ²⁷Ibid.
- ²⁸*Northern Virginia Sun*, April 3, 1963, p. 1.
- ²⁹*Northern Virginia Sun*, April 4, 1963, p. 1.
- ³⁰Ibid.
- ³¹Oral — Taylor.
- ³²Oral — Randall.
- ³³*Washington Post*, op. cit.

Oral Histories

Oral History Collection, Virginia Room — Central Library
Arlington County Public Library Association

Interviewer: Edmund D. Campbell

Interviewee

Theda Henle
Barnard Joy

Date

April 9, 1984
December 6, 1983

William Lightsey
James Stockard

no date given
April 23, 1984

Interviewer: Cecelia Michelotti

Interviewee

Larry Randall
Walter Taylor

Date
April 24, 1987
April 21, 1987

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A CHRONOLOGY OF DESEGREGATION AS IT PERTAINS TO ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

1869

Virginia Constitution Convention meets. The 24 Negro members urge the establishment of "mixed schools." Many radicals fight hard and win the dual system.

1910

May — NATIONAL ASSOCIATION for the ADVANCEMENT of COLORED PEOPLE is established.

1948

Jan. 1 — Arlington installs its first elected school board with the consent of state officials. It is the only school board in the state which is not appointed.

1954

May 17 — The Supreme Court rules in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, mandating "all deliberate speed" to desegregate schools.

May 27 — Superintendent of Public Instruction in the State of Virginia directs all city and county school superintendents to proceed with plans for the 1954-55 school year on the same basis of segregation as that which was previously in effect.

June 14 — Arlington School Board appoints the Arlington Committee of 30 citizens to study desegregation.

Aug. 30 — Virginia Gov. Thomas B. Stanley appoints the Gray Commission to recommend how Virginia should respond to the Supreme Court decision.

Sept. 30 — Arlington Public Schools include five Negro schools with 1,165 pupils, and thirty-nine white schools with 19,350 students. Negro enrollment is 5.8% of the total school enrollment. There are 50 Negro teachers and 776 white teachers. All are paid on the same salary scale.

1955

A Virginia Council on Human Relations forms to promote friendship between the races and "reduce racial tension, racial misunderstanding, and racial distrust."

1956

Jan. 14 — Arlington School Board votes to put bond referendum on ballot for new schools and to desegregate elementary schools the following fall and secondary schools in 1957.

March 1 — Virginia General Assembly revokes Arlington's right to have elected school boards, requiring that members be appointed by the County Board.

May — NAACP files federal suits to demand desegregation of schools in Arlington, Norfolk, Charlottesville, and Front Royal.

Sept. 22 — Virginia General Assembly approves "massive resistance" laws, empowering the governor to close any school system that desegregates and to cut off state funds for those schools.

1958

May — NAACP in Virginia reaches 27,000 membership, larger than any other state in the South.

Sept. 8 — Federal judges rule that Norfolk, Charlottesville, and Front Royal must desegregate immediately. Days later, Gov. J. Lindsay Almond Jr. closes schools in those three cities.

Sept. 17 — U.S. District Court Judge Albert V. Bryan Sr. rules that Arlington must desegregate in February 1959.

Sept. — Arlington Committee to Preserve Public Schools moves beyond Arlington to

“spread the movement and arouse the state.”

Nov. — Membership in Arlington Committee to Preserve Public Schools, now shortened to “Committee for Public Schools,” reaches 6,500 members.

1959

Jan. 19 — Virginia Supreme Court and a three-judge federal panel rule that “massive resistance” is unconstitutional.

Jan. 23 — Arlington is ordered to admit four Negro pupils to Stratford Junior High School on February 2.

Jan. 28 — Governor Almond switches his position, saying that Virginia must abide by the law and desegregate its public schools.

Feb. 2 — Four black seventh graders enter Stratford Junior High School in Arlington without incident, and seventeen blacks enter white schools in Norfolk.

Sept. — Membership in Virginia Committee for Public Schools is over 22,000 and is still growing. The Committee is now an ally of the state administration. The organization continues to combat recurring efforts to revive massive resistance throughout the year.

1962

April 19 — The School Board adopts the Revised Rental Policies for Use of School Buildings and Grounds which includes the provision that school facilities may be rented to responsible parent groups to sponsor such activities as dances for students of the school and their guests, and that the rate be \$9 instead of \$6.

Aug. 16 — In approving extracurricular activities in the junior and senior high schools for the 1962-63 school year, the Board understands that in the senior high schools all dances will be school-parent sponsored; in the junior high schools the only dance will be the 9th Grade Prom, which will be school-parent sponsored, and no building rental fees will be applicable to school-parent sponsored dances.

1963

April 1 — The School Board votes unanimously to open summer school teaching to any Arlington staff member who wishes to apply. It is the hope of the board that the black teachers will apply.

April 3 — In a closed meeting the School Board votes to close Hoffman-Boston Senior High School, effective in the 1964-65 school year.

June 6 — The School Board adopts a personnel policy which precludes race as a consideration in all personnel actions. As a result of this action, the Arlington school staff is integrated. It is the first district in the state of Virginia to desegregate staff.

Aug. — One Negro supervisor is assigned to two white elementary schools; one white supervisor is assigned to a Negro elementary school; one Negro physics teacher is assigned to a white high school; and two full time and two part time white teachers are assigned to Negro schools.

1964

April 9 — The Board adopts the School Attendance Areas for the 1964-65 school year.

Summer — For the 1964 Summer School, all children living in South Arlington attend the Drew Elementary School (previously a Negro school). It is now air-conditioned and remodeled.

Aug. 19 — Hoffman-Boston Junior High School will have mixed classes for the first time this fall. Because of attendance areas, eighteen elementary schools will remain all white; three schools will remain black. (In 1963, six schools were all black.)

Sept. 5 — Former students of Hoffman-Boston Senior High School are now attending the three remaining high schools.

Fall — Assignments of pupils in all Arlington County public schools will continue to be determined on the basis of "geographic district" and without regard to race. Hoffman-Boston Junior High School is integrated.

Fall — Of the 2.9 million Negro children in the South, 1.18 percent are in integrated schools.

1965

Arlington Schools are awarded a federal grant under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The grant is called "The Project for Facilitating Integration." This three year project will provide staff development for teachers and administrators, designed to assist in the integration process.

Sept. — Hoffman-Boston Junior High School closes its doors. Students and teachers are assigned to the other five junior high schools.

1966

Fall — 65 percent of Negro first graders are in schools which are 90-100 percent Negro.

1971

June 21 — The School Board releases a court-approved plan to desegregate Arlington schools. The plan converts Arlington to a unitary non-racial system.

1973-74

Sept. — The Concerned Arlington County Residents Committee developed the Human Relations Proposal for the schools. They cited racial tensions, overt and subtle, and suggested school personnel assistance and training in the development of creative attitudes and solutions.

1983-84

Sept. — The School Board responds to parent concerns over the busing of Nauck area black students by decreasing the number of students bused in grades one through three.

1986—87

Sept. — The School Board voted in favor of Nauck students bused to Barcroft remaining at Barcroft for grades four through six rather than being bused to North Arlington schools.

1987-88

Sept. — The School Board is studying further possibilities for modification of Arlington's unitary system. Citizen committees are meeting regularly to develop satisfactory alternatives in the system, making certain not to damage in any way the unitary non-racial system.