THE ROAD TO INTEGRATION: ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS 1959–1971

by Alison Bauer Campbell

Introduction

> The world may be conceived of as a series of concentric circles. We are at the center, surrounded by our family. Beyond the family lies the circle of the community; beyond it, the nation; surrounding all, the international community. Events in one circle affect events in the other circles. While the effects are not as profound as we work from the center of the circle outward, surely the cumulative effects of family decisions eventually alter the structures of communities and of nations.
>
> H.P.R. Finberg[1]

As has been written so many times before, Brown v Board of Education was not the end of segregation so much as the beginning of desegregation.[2] That process in Arlington Public Schools took nearly 20 years, beginning with the integration of four students on February 2, 1959. It continued through to 1971 when, with the advent of busing black children to formerly white schools, Arlington was declared a unitary, non-racial school system. The process leading to desegregation in 1959 was long and very painful for those involved and is described thoroughly elsewhere.[3] This study explores the process of integration that began that day and continued until 1971, with a focus on the events as they occurred in the Arlington community at large, the deliberations of the School Board and within the school buildings. Each of these realms affected the other and laid a firm foundation for the multicultural programs found throughout these same schools today. The "circles" of Finberg's illustration above lend understanding to the entire process of school desegregation in Arlington.

Arlington County in the 1950s was nearly five percent black, a very small percentage compared to other communities in the South. In January 1956, the elected Arlington County School Board approved an integration plan to be implemented in September 1956. James Stockard, a school board member in 1954, described the dilemma:

> We had to decide whether we were going to further expand those (Negro schools) buildings, because the black population 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.[4]

Mrs. Alice Sufit, a teacher at Wakefield (the white high school in South Arlington) remembers: "We were desperately looking for classroom space at Wakefield. They hollowed out some of the basement and what had been the old rifle range was converted into classrooms." Wakefield's principal Ralph Kier in 1959 described one method to alleviate overcrowding:

> We had 3400 students at Wakefield, far more than the capacity (1800)...so the Dolly Madison facility was still available. We made arrangements to set up a staff at Dolly Madison for tenth grade students and we bused half of the tenth grade class...in the morning...and then bused the other half to Dolly Madison for their subjects at the tenth grade level.[5]

This integration plan became the catalyst for state legislators to pass a law that revoked the practice of elected school boards in order to avoid desegregation within Virginia. The state phased in an appointed school board officially opposed to desegregation in Arlington and forced the hand of local activists, families and the NAACP to seek redress through the federal courts. In May of 1956 the NAACP filed suit in federal court demanding desegregation of schools in Arlington, Front Royal, Charlottesville and Norfolk. One week later the court ordered the students into school, the school board appealed to the Supreme Court, and the order was suspended while the case was appealed. In September 1956 the Virginia General Assembly approved massive resistance laws, empowering the governor to close any school system that desegregated and to cut off state funds for those schools.[6] These laws made it possible to avoid federal intervention in what was passionately held as a state and local issue.

The state then enacted the Pupil Placement Act which divested the local School Board of power and authority to admit or enroll pupils in the public schools and vested such power in the Virginia Pupil Placement Board. After that date all pupil assignments to Arlington County Schools were made by the VPPB.[7] Black students not involved in the federal suit began to apply for admission to the county's white schools and were consistently denied. Under the Pupil Placement Act these students were interviewed after having filled out compulsory applications. Mrs. Dorothy Hamm, a parent and activist at the time, recalled at the twenty-fifth anniversary of the desegregation, held on February 26, 1984 at Calloway United Methodist Church, how parents would record the questions asked and play them to the next parents with an appointment. To apply to a white school became a trigger for hate phone calls, hate mail and cross burnings. Local churches, black and white, and civic groups

continued the struggle, nonetheless, to desegregate Arlington's public schools.

In January of 1959, the Virginia Supreme Court and a three-judge federal panel ruled "massive resistance" laws unconstitutional. One week later Governor Jay Almond switched his position, publicly declaring that Virginia must abide by the law of the land and desegregate its public schools.

> 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, public schools in Virginia would have been closed.[8]

Campbell gave credit to Arlington County and PTA activist Bill Lightsey and the Statewide PTA convention in the previous Fall for their influence upon Virginia's Governor Almond. The vote at this PTA convention was to take whatever action was necessary to keep the schools open

Four of the original thirty plaintiffs in Arlington were finally ordered into school by United States District Court Judge Albert V. Bryan, Sr. Despite a plea by Congressman Joseph Broyhill for parents to wait until September, the students walked into Stratford Junior High School with the nation watching on February 2, 1959. With only one bomb threat and no violence, the process of integration was begun. "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," recalled Edmund Campbell[9] looking back on the desegregation efforts twenty-five years later.

1959–1971

> Even after desegregation had proceeded quietly in Arlington and in Alexandria the following week, Arlington officials were still concerned over the General Assembly's repeal of the State-wide compulsory attendance law...Generally, adjustment of whites and Negroes to the new situation has been commendable. [Superintendent]Reid said problems were reduced by careful planning, cooperation, understanding and most important, public support of public education.[10]

This seems to be the theme of Arlington Public Schools throughout the entire integration process - public support of public education. The process was by no means easy or painless, but quite the opposite. Arlington County continued with a gradual process of desegregation. With a combination of school closings, school construction, redistricting and eventually busing, the

schools began to achieve some racial balance.

The process falls into three categories of activity which correspond to the concentric circles described in the opening quote: the Arlington community, the Arlington school board and the Arlington school buildings.

Community Activity

As could be expected during this time the Arlington community was organized into different camps. There were those who believed it was best to uphold the segregationist laws of Virginia, whether they were right or wrong. "We should have stayed the way we were a little longer," explained Joseph Courtney, an Arlington teacher and executive secretary of the Arlington Education Association in the 1950's.[11] Then there were those who in their churches, PTAs, or civic groups pushed for further integration. Regardless of the varied opinions, "concern was directed more toward keeping the schools open than to the possibility of partial integration of the schools."[12] Arlington was a highly educated community where great value was placed upon children's schooling. "A large majority of them [parents] were determined that the schools would not close if any legal course could be found to keep them open."[13] In a report of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, Chairman Arthur Fleming concluded: "Where public and private leaders publicly supported the peaceful implementation of school desegregation, whether court-ordered or voluntary and irrespective of the mechanics used, the process tended to proceed smoothly and more effectively than in districts where such support was lacking." Such was the case in Arlington.

Arlington's desegregation and integration were not without incident. Many participants supportive of desegregation in the late fifties and early sixties recall harassment either by phone, mail or cross burnings.[14] However, it seems that once the initial desegregation occurred and initial fears were quelled the overt harassment abated. But the context for racial tension still existed and is understandable in light of the years preceding the admission of black students.

Hesitation to integrate was not isolated within the white community. Black students may have been hesitant about integration as well. Ralph Kier, principal at Yorktown High School said:

> I always felt that many of our students in the Green Valley area [a black community in South Arlington] would prefer to have attended a school more closely related to their neighborhood because even though we had after school activity busses, a lot of these students did not participate in after school activities. Some of them just wouldn't do it because to remain at school for an hour and a half or two hours and then be bused home was not satisfactory.[15]

Larry Randall, who integrated into Thomas Jefferson Junior high in 1960, remembers:

> 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.[16] ...Everybody in those sections felt more comfortable about the setting they were in. They felt more secure. We figure 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...[with the closing of All-Negro Hoffman Boston High School].[17]

The support for integration also came from various sources in the community not directly involved in the schools. In personal papers archived in the Virginia Room in Arlington's Central Library, Barbara Marx, a parent and civil rights activist, had many notes of meetings among parent and community groups discussing issues ranging from Montgomery County's process of integration to reasons why Negro students in segregated schools should transfer to non-segregated schools. In Mrs. Marx's papers there is also correspondence from the NAACP encouraging Mrs. Marx to encourage parents to submit "timely applications" for pupil transfers.

David Krupshaw, in an Anti-Defamation League Bulletin dated February, 1959, found in Mrs. Marx's papers, discussed orientations for the students led by a Negro mother and conferences held by Negro and white parents. Workshops with the black youngsters prepared them for the emotional adjustment to the white school. White teachers volunteered to tutor the students. Several white parents arranged parties for the Negro children to get together with white students from Stratford so that the new students would see a few familiar faces that first day. Churches in Arlington formed parent groups, a biracial youth group, The United Us, and a joint Bible school. They held meetings to discuss strategies. Sydney Lovett, pastor at Rock Spring Church in North Arlington, recalled that they had "to keep the pressure on" to keep integration moving forward.[18]

Many of the black students in the first integration groups recall their parents' initiatives. In a videotape of the twenty-fifth anniversary commemoration of the integration of Arlington Schools, Barbara Harrison, the first black graduate of Washington-Lee High School, recalls: "Mom forced me to go to that school, walk the picket lines. My education was much better. When you meet people of different cultures and accept their differences." Michael Jones' parents did not ask him, they simply told him he was "transferring from one school to another." Ronald Deskins, one of the original four recalls: "Really I

didn't want to leave my friends...I wanted to stay with the people I had known all my life. It was our parents who were taking the risk. They had jobs and homes they could lose."

School Board Activity

During this time the School Board, an appointed body, continued to strive for quality education in the community. Despite school integration, the Arlington schools still enforced Virginia's other segregation laws.[19] The schools were influenced not only by state laws and court orders, but by the community groups for and against integration. In 1959 (after the initial desegregation) to comply with the existing state laws of public segregation, the Board passed a resolution denying school sponsorship of dances and requiring parent groups to rent the facilities for six dollars per evening provided the event was not integrated.[20] The three boys from the original desegregation group were denied places on the Stratford football team or any other contact sports teams. Black parents were forced to sit apart from white parents at school functions and school board meetings. In county board meeting minutes much discussion ensued about what to do after school hours on the integrated schools' playgrounds as it was against the law to allow integration on the playground, regardless of what happened during school hours.[21]

Integration proceeded slowly the following year, 1960, when nine more black students were admitted into formerly white schools. Despite this movement of desegregation the county opened Yorktown, a new white high school in North Arlington. This was to alleviate overcrowding at Wakefield, the white high school in South Arlington.

The *Washington Post* reported the integration of adult education on January 11, 1961, with the admittance of a black woman to an Intermediate Shorthand course. (Only one person of a different race was needed to declare a school or program integrated.) Two years later, 1963, the School Board voted unanimously to open summer school teaching to any Arlington staff member, black or white, who wished to apply.[22] The Arlington Education Association for white teachers and the Arlington Teachers' Association for black teachers voted to merge this same year. Subsequently, the biracial Arlington Education Association was removed from the Virginia Education Association until 1968 when the policy of the VEA changed.

Finally, on June 6, 1963, the School Board adopted a Personnel Policy which precluded race as a consideration in all personnel actions.[23] Staff integration was achieved through a combination of transfers (resulting from school closings) of Negro teachers into previously white schools. Teacher transfers included regular transfer procedures as well as Personnel Office assignments

based on placements for "optimum success."[24] Evelyn Syphax, a third grade teacher at Langston in 1963, recalled "as [black] schools phased out, the superintendent tried to find a new location so teachers would have a job. Those interested in being placed were placed. No black teacher was disinterested." Only one white teacher chose to leave upon her arrival into a previously white school.[25] It is important to note that Arlington was the first district in Virginia to desegregate its staff.[26]

Following the Supreme Court Ruling in the case of Goss v Knoxville, Tennessee Board of Education, et al., the Arlington School Board adopted the "Change in the Rules and Policies Governing Assignment of Pupils." The Pupil Placement Officer was now directed to reassign those black pupils attending schools outside their regular attendance areas to the school serving the geographic district in which they resided.[27] The neighborhood school idea was gaining ground, and with the April ninth vote to close the high school section of the black Hoffman-Boston school, the practice was becoming more widespread. The following year on April 9, the board adopted the 1964-65 School Attendance Areas, eliminating the Hoffman-Boston Senior High attendance area and desegregating the North Arlington Taylor Elementary, Williamsburg Junior High and Yorktown High.[28] All three high schools and all five junior high schools in Arlington were now integrated. That summer the formerly all-black Drew elementary, now remodeled and air-conditioned, accepted all students from South Arlington for summer school,[29] thus reversing the trend of sending black students to white schools and allowing for the integration of one previously all-black elementary school.

The year 1965 brought the closing of the all-black junior high school, Hoffman-Boston, the redistricting of junior high school boundaries, and the formation of the new Thomas Jefferson attendance area. The Hoffman-Boston building served as an annex for Thomas Jefferson's seventh graders to alleviate TJ's overcrowding.[30] This year also brought a federal grant under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 financing the Board-created "Long Range Staff Development Program to Facilitate Effective Integration" (known as the PFFI).

The PFFI was a three phase program designed to work with Arlington Public Schools' staff and teachers. It was created on the recommendation to the School Board by a group of citizens which stated:

> ...In its broadest sense, the aim of public education will be realized only when equality of opportunity for a fine education is made available to all of our citizens. To accomplish this, we must provide an educationally sound program, with facilities needing no apology. Nor should the facilities be subject to challenge because they are unequal. Our aspirations are within the grasp of our community.[31]

The PFFI stated that this goal would be realized when children were no longer artificially segregated by race because they lived within school districts whose boundaries were at some previous time fixed to preserve segregation. These children would be properly served when they no longer attended schools by virtue of their residence that did not meet the standards for the best education that could be given.[32] Test scores included in this proposal attest to the differences of levels of education given countywide versus in all black schools (see Appendix 1). These test scores serve to disprove the earlier notion expressed by Superintendent Ray Reid that poor performance by black students was an individual problem rather than a systemic problem.

The three phases of the PFFI included Staff in-Service Training, Intensive Training of Personnel Specialists for Effective Learning Programs in Integrated Schools, and Extensive Programs for Continual Staff Development and Effective Curriculum Changes. "It is the conviction of the writers that these experiences will enable the staff to grow in their ability to work with and understand individual students of widely varying ethnic and social differences."[33]

The guiding assumptions of the plan included:

> 1. To change from a segregated to an integrated school requires a great deal more than simply changing policy or making change(s) in school assignments, or even certain changes in the composition of the classroom. It involves personal crises for many of the people caught up in it, and teachers themselves may be resistant to giving their full support, not because they are bias[ed]—although they may very well be. It may be they are resistant simply because they feel grossly incompetent to deal with a situation which they never had before, and for which they have had no training.
> 2. Integration will take time because it involves changes in personal attitudes, the unlearning of deep-seated prejudice and the development of appreciation of and respect for individual worth and dignity.
> 3. The significant influence of teacher attitudes toward cultural differences, educational and economic disadvantagement, and differing value systems demands that educators develop new insights, knowledge and skills to perform effectively in an integrated school.[34]

The PFFI was a major source of support for integration within the schools most affected by integration during 1965-1970. The program was mandatory at some schools including Gunston and Thomas Jefferson Junior High Schools where most of the former Hoffman Boston students attended.[35] The grant restricted participation to faculty members only. Part of this program required teachers to sit face to face with members of another race and discuss issues to increase understanding between the races. Mrs. Evelyn Syphax, a teacher at

Langston and Hoffman-Boston before desegregation and Clay/Fillmore after the closing of Hoffman-Boston, recalled learning the customs and mores of different cultures and "things you would say" to students of a different race. She also recalled much discussion about the black dialect because white teachers could not understand what their black students were saying. Mrs. Syphax's participation in the PFFI classes was elective.[36] One cannot help but recognize within these activities the roots of today's multi-cultural education and the continued need to understand people from other cultures.

Dan Brown, director of Human Relations in Arlington Schools from 1975 to 1985, described the follow-up program he described as "Human Catalysts."[37] The Human Relations Council comprised of students, parents, administrators, teachers and community members met monthly to assess the needs of the schools. Human Relations Catalysts, staff members intensively trained in the summer, returned to their schools and gave workshops to fellow staff members. The topics discussed included black and white issues, leadership, affirmative action, and Title IX. What was begun in the late 1960s as an effort to cope with a radical cultural change continued into the seventies and eighties to deal with continued change.

It is significant to note that the PFFI foreshadowed the radical change in population that Arlington has experienced in the last twenty years with the immigration of Southeast Asians and Central Americans. In a community that was nearly ninety percent white in the 1950s, Arlington currently has schools where white students are the minority: Barrett Elementary in central Arlington is 84 percent minority today. The fact that Arlington has schools which are still close to ninety percent white — Jamestown Elementary remains 91 percent white[38] — attests to the work to be done if racial integration is still desired.

The final push to eliminate a dual system of education for black and white students in the county came in three steps. The first step was the closing of the previously all-black Langston Elementary in 1966. The second step was the assignment of a large group of white students to Drew Elementary. This was done to relieve overcrowding at a predominately white elementary school in another part of Arlington and was the only example of white children integrating a previously all-black school rather than the reverse. The final step in eliminating Arlington's dual system of education was the adoption of a court-approved unitary school system plan on June 28, 1971.

Through this very complicated plan, integration was achieved by converting two all black schools from neighborhood schools into special purpose, or model, schools and transporting black children to other schools in the county. The historically black Nauck area students attended Drew, their neighborhood school during kindergarten. They then were bused to a South Arlington

Elementary Pupil Membership Of Schools Receiving Drew And Hoffman-Boston Students 1971–72

SCHOOLS	# NEGRO NOW	NEGROES ADDED	TOTAL NEGRO	SCHOOL TOTAL*	% NEGRO	% OVER-CAPACITY
Abingdon	11	52	63	522	12.1	-
Ashlawn	14	30	44	388	11.3	1
Barcroft	3	39	42	353	11.9	1
Claremont	5	49	54	457	11.8	2
Clay-Fillmore	6	27	33	327	10.1	1
Custis	0	34	34	287	11.8	-
Fairlington	8	32	40	341	11.7	-
Glencarlyn	35	7	42	446	9.4	5
Jackson	2	12	14	420	3.3	5
Jamestown	0	66	66	555	11.9	-
Key	13	11	24	677	3.5	5
Madison	0	36	36	299	12.0	-
Maury	3	17	20	173	11.6	-
McKinley	13	30	43	353	12.2	-
Nottingham	2	28	30	524	5.7	5
Oakridge	29	37	66	556	11.9	-
Page	2	42	44	368	12.0	-
Randolph	8	46	54	481	11.2	1
Taylor	59	10	69	596	11.6	-
Tuckahoe	2	58	60	523	11.5	5
Woodmont	0	41	41	342	12.0	-
Total	546	704	1250	8988	11.1	

*The total includes only schools receiving Drew and H-B students. The total elementary population totaled 11,233 (from APS, Department of Research, June 25, 1971).

school during grades one through three and to a more distant North Arlington school in grades four through six. The option existed for all students in Arlington County, including those from Nauck, to attend Drew as an alternative or model school.[39]

Students from the Nauck area who did not choose to attend the alternative school housed at Drew were subsequently bused to as many as twenty-one different elementary schools, five different junior high schools and two different high schools throughout Arlington. This component of the plan drew opposition from the black community and an appeal was made to the Fourth Circuit Court of the U.S. Court of Appeals, stating that "the burden of transfer and transportation fell more heavily on black students than on white students." The court upheld the District Court decision to approve the School Board's plan.

The school assignment plan remained essentially the same until the 1983-84 school year. The boundary changes that did occur were the result of school closings due to population changes.[40] Today Nauck area students are still given the option to attend either of two magnet schools, Drew Alternative School or the Arlington Traditional School, from first through sixth grade. Those who choose neither are bused to four, rather than the previous twenty-one, nearby elementary schools.

School Activity

Within school buildings from 1959-1971, administrators, teachers, and students were dealing with a rapidly changing environment. In order to cope, and succeed, they also developed strategies to meet their unique challenges. Besides the aforementioned PFFI, individual schools dealt with the immediate impact of integration with various strategies that changed over time.

The initial integration in 1959 called for "only the mechanics of the necessary arrangements."[41] For example, at Stratford Junior High, Claude M. Richmond, the principal, dealt with the immediate needs of desegregation such as safety and overt behavior. Mr. Richmond followed a careful plan to prepare his school which included meetings with each seventh grade section, student assemblies to answer questions, Rules of Procedure sent home with each student, meeting with black students and parents in the black school, and thorough discussion with the faculty of Stratford.[42] However, needs and activities beyond "necessary arrangements," such as student orientations and tutoring of students, occurred within the community as previously described and were not connected with the schools.

The following assessment from Superintendent Ray Reid's statement to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights highlights the prevailing attitude at the onset of desegregation:

> All four Senior High School students are working considerably below the average of other students. Whether this poor school work is caused by difficulties of adjustment, poor preparation, lack of ability or the high standards of the new school, I do not know...*Scholastic difficulties are an individual student problem rather than a school problem* [emphasis added]. The standards in Arlington County Schools are high and will remain high. For this reason some Negro students have experienced severe scholastic difficulties. They have been assigned, in some instances, to classes in a white school where the pupil - teacher ratio is not as favorable as the ratio in the Negro schools in which they were previously enrolled.[43]

The above statement from 1960 reflects the focus on academics rather than student needs. By 1962 the superintendent's report declared that "each student is recognized as an individual and the program seeks to develop the maximum of his capabilities and potential. Emphasis is placed on helping each student to acquire the skills necessary for future learning and self-reliance as a future citizen."[44] The Program of Study for the following school year, 1963-1964, illustrated how the county had firmly shifted the educational focus to the student: "We know...from extensive study and research in human growth and development, that wide and persistent differences in ability, achievement, and motivation exist among individuals. We know that teachers cannot lead all children down standardized roads to learning; that the same rigid standards cannot be applied to every learner. Individual needs must be met, not disregarded."[45]

The Programs of Studies were created by the administration to guide instruction in the classroom and certainly may not always reflect precisely what was happening in every classroom. However, in speaking with teachers from this period some classrooms did experience a shift in instruction with the addition of more "learner friendly" courses. Wilmer Mountain, a math teacher at Yorktown High School from 1962, recalled, "We had to meet their level." Mr. Mountain described School Mathematics Study Groups initially developed to aid more academically able students to succeed in high math. These groups were later altered to reach less able students in lower levels of math. Following this program were math classes such as Algebra I which was offered in two years rather that the previous requirement of one year.[46]

Clarence Seldomridge, a science teacher at Yorktown from its opening year in 1960, described the changes he saw in his biology program, "Regular Biology became Intensified [Biology]...Instead of teaching DNA and genetics, we talked about trees and worms."[47]

Did black students in white schools create the need for more individualized instruction? Or did the Civil Rights Movement heighten the awareness of the

individual thus creating change? Or did the Vietnam War cause a shift in allegiance away from the norm? Certainly no single event or series of events caused curriculum changes in any school or school district. But it is valuable to note and understand these changes within their historical context.

Alice Sufit, who began her Arlington teaching career in 1962, recalls:

> The first year I was there it was all white. The first couple of years the integration was very, very smooth because the black students at Hoffman-Boston were very well coached, I think on how they...(behave). Then with the turmoil in '68 of the [Kennedy and King] assassinations...the problems increased...black students and families felt more comfortable in the school in the sense that they were acting more spontaneously rather than trying to maintain a behavior.[48]

Finally, the students who actually walked into the buildings each day experienced a rapidly changing environment. They were supported by their parents, teachers, and churches. Sharon Monde, a former Langston student who integrated into her neighborhood junior high school in 1962, recalled in a December 22, 1995 telephone interview how her teachers at Langston "tried to assist us to understand this would be a different situation. They wanted us to know who we were, from where we came." Other students who spoke at the twenty-fifth reunion reiterated the strong support from their elementary school teachers.

Michael Jones remembered at the February 15, 1996 panel how the time was a blur. He gave credit to the meetings and classes he attended to prepare for integration. He also recalled the difficulty of the time and that "it was better after I went for the others than it was for me."

Conclusion

The schools in Arlington County were the avenue chosen to effect social change throughout the community. They were the staging ground in Arlington, as well as other school districts throughout the United States. But a key difference in Arlington was that this county led the change within Virginia. The courts certainly forced action, but it must always be remembered that the parents and other community members with the support of the NAACP filed the suits that led to the court decisions. The parents, community members, and the school board fought long and hard to gain equality of educational opportunity for all students. At all stages in this battle was the foundation of public support of public education. At no time did Arlington's parents, community members or the school board choose to abandon its public schools. The methods employed to achieve equal opportunity such as busing small

children across county have since been revised or abandoned for more palatable solutions. Researching this era has helped me to understand the sharp racial tension that still existed in the early 1980's when I was a student at Yorktown High School. Without this background I did not and could not appreciate how fresh the pain of integration was and, I believe, still is.

The battles that remain today are wrapped up in the umbrella of multiculturalism. In Arlington there are more different people than ever before. There is a greater need today to understand the people who live in Arlington and their children who are members of its schools. There is talk throughout the country of resegregation, intended or unintended. There is a sense of grief for the community and culture that were lost with the closing of all-black schools. There is talk of group differences and how to best define the boundaries of groups. There is denial of the vast inequalities that existed before desegregation. As a non-historian studying a recent past I see these battles and issues are not new. As human beings we define ourselves by how we are different. That will never change. What I have learned is we must define our common center. In the opening quote Finberg provides an illustration using concentric circles, circles that share a common center point. It is our job to define what our common center point is. What is it we are striving for? In Arlington in the 1940s through 1970s it was an excellent public education for all children. I suspect it still is.

Notes And References

Alison Bauer Campbell is a native Arlingtonian and graduate of the Arlington Public Schools. This paper was written as part of her Masters' Program in Social Foundations of Education at the University of Virginia.

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[2] United States Commission on Civil Rights: *Fulfilling the Letter and Spirit of the Law — Desegregation of the Nation's Public Schools*, (1976), p.6.

[3] Cecelia Michelotti, "Arlington School Desegregation: A History," *The Arlington Historical Magazine*, Volume 8, No.4, October 1988.

[4] Ibid., p.7.

[5] Oral History Collection: Ralph Kier, January 25, 1990, Arlington County Public Library, Virginia Room.

[6] Michelotti, "Arlington School Desegregation," p. 17.

[7] Ray E. Reid, "Statement by the Superintendent of Arlington County Public Schools to the United States Commission on Civil Rights," March 22, 1960; from the archival files of Barbara Marx, Arlington County Public Library, Virginia Room.

[8] Edmund Campbell in Michelotti, "Arlington School Desegregation," p. 10.

[9] *Washington Post*, February 1, 1984.

[10] *Washington Post*, February 3, 1959.
[11] Telephone interview, May 30, 1996.
[12] Reid, "Statement to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights."
[13] Ibid.
[14] Dorothy Hamm, community activist and mother of students who integrated into white schools, detailed these events on videotape both at the twenty-fifth anniversary commemoration at Calloway United Methodist Church, February 26, 1984, and at the thirty-fifth anniversary panel discussion at HB-Woodlawn School, February 15, 1996. Arlington Public Library, Virginia Room.
[15] Oral History collection: Kier
[16] They were Nauck, Green Valley, and Hall's Hill, communities established near the end of the Civil War.
[17] Michelotti, "Arlington School Desegregation."
[18] From videotape at Calloway United Methodist Church, February 1985, Arlington County Public Library, Virginia Room.
[19] Leah Latimer, "Twenty-five Years Ago: Four Recall Integrating Arlington School," *The Washington Post*, February 1, 1984.
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[23] Henry Gardner, notes from presentation, "A Non-Historian's Potpourri of Some Historical Happenings in the Arlington Schools since the Early Fifties," August 16-18, 1989, p. 5.
[24] Anonymous report on Staff Integration, December 13, 1966, from the personal files of Henry Gardner.
[25] Personal interview, June 5, 1996.
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[27] Gardner, "A Non-Historian's Potpourri."
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[31] Henry Gardner, unpublished document entitled "PFFI Evaluation," 1968, p. 1.
[32] Harold M. Wilson, *A Long Range Staff Development Program to Facilitate Effective Integration in the Arlington County Public Schools* (Arlington: The Arlington County School Board, June 9, 1965).
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Henry Gardner in telephone interview, June 5, 1996.
[36] Telephone interview, June 5, 1996.
[37] Telephone interview, December 22, 1995.
[38] Arlington Public Schools Statistical Summary, May 30, 1996.
[39] The information concerning this plan came from an undated document labeled #813, Arlington Public Schools, Desegregation Issues in the archival files of Barbara Marx, Arlington County Public Library, Virginia Room.
[40] Michelotti, "Arlington School Desegregation."
[41] David Krupshaw, Anti-Defamation League Bulletin, February 1959, from the archival files of Barbara Marx, Arlington County Public Library, Virginia Room.
[42] Reid, "Statement to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights."
[43] Ibid.
[44] *The Public School Program, 1962-63*, (Arlington: Arlington County Public Schools), from the archival files of Elizabeth Campbell, Arlington County Public Library, Virginia Room.
[45] *Program of Studies, 1963-64*, from the archival files of Elizabeth Campbell, Arlington County Public Library, Virginia Room.
[46] Personal interview, May 19, 1996.
[47] Personal interview, May 19, 1996.
[48] Oral History Collection: Alice Sufit, Arlington County Public Library, Virginia Room, p. 11. I find this comment extremely insightful regarding the tension that existed in the schools during the 1970s and well into the 1980s. There are other factors involved, certainly, but Mrs. Sufit captured an important element.

Appendix 1: Summary of Selected Testing Results, 1963–64

Iowa Silent Reading Test, Seventh Grade, Administered 3/64

	COUNTY	DREW	HOFFMAN-BOSTON	LANGSTON
Grade equivalent	8.9	N/A	6.3	N/A
Percentile	68	N/A	21	N/A

California Achievement Test, Administered 10/63

AREA TESTED	COUNTY	DREW	HOFFMAN-BOSTON	LANGSTON
		Fourth Grade		
Reading Vocabulary	4.9	3.9	4.3	3.8
Reading Comprehension	4.7	3.7	3.8	3.4
Arithmetic Reasoning	4.9	4.3	4.2	3.9
Arithmetic Fundamentals	4.5	4.2	4.2	4.1
English	4.6	3.8	3.5	3.7
Spelling	5.2	4	3.8	3.8
		Sixth Grade		
Reading Vocabulary	6.6	4.9	5.3	5.5
Reading Comprehension	7	5.3	5.4	5.4
Arithmetic Reasoning	6.4	5.3	5.8	5.4
Arithmetic Fundamentals	6.5	5.5	5.7	5.8
English	6.6	5	5.2	5.1
Spelling	6.8	5.7	6.5	5.9

Sequential Test of Educational Progress, Junior High Schools, Administered Fall 1964

	Percentile Scores	
AREA TESTED	COUNTY	HOFFMAN-BOSTON
Mathematics	76	30
Science	78	36
Social Studies	80	21
Reading	77	26
Listening	88	29
Writing	76	38

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