Celebrating the Landmark Brown Case

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Thurgood Marshall, represented her and her father, as well as a score of other families.

The challenges facing black elementary students in Topeka were similar to those in other parts of the country. In Prince Edward County, Virginia, black students could attend only one high school, which was seriously overcrowded and sorely lacking in appropriate facilities. In Clarendon County, South Carolina, about 75 percent of the schoolchildren were black and attended separate schools. Yet they received only 40 percent of the school district's funds.

These cases, as well as one from Delaware and another from the District of Columbia, were argued together. They are commonly referred to as Bolling v. Sharpe.

Attorneys for the plaintiffs who argued the case before the Supreme Court were Thurgood Marshall, who subsequently became the first African-American U.S. Supreme Court justice, Greenberg, Louis L. Redding, and Charles L. Black, Jr. (a professor at Columbia and Yale law schools), Constance Baker Motley, Law '46, and Weinstein.

On May 17, 1954, Chief Justice Earl Warren delivered the ruling that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." According to Greenberg, who was a key figure in the NAACP's LDF for some 35 years, the country's reaction to the decision when it first came down was "conflicted." President Dwight Eisenhower—also the former President of Columbia University—said only that the law must be obeyed.

Brown ruled that the federal government couldn't enforce segregation, but Southern states sought to circumvent the ruling by creating administrative obstacles to the transfer of students to other schools. These delaying tactics, Pollack said, galvanized the civil rights movement. And the court case also became a catalyst for changes in legal structures governing far more than education; it put the force of law on the side of desegregation in policy area after policy area.

For more details, visit www.law.columbia.edu.

Mrs. Thurgood Marshall

Diplomats, Scholars Consider Humanitarian Crises

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Columbia professor of population and family health and deputy director of the Center for Global Health and Economic Development; and Ramiro Lopes da Silva, former U.N. humanitarian coordinator in Iraq.

"This spring semester, Columbians and SIPA are focusing attention on one of the most critical areas of international and U.S. foreign policy, reviewing the failures and successes of our approach to the humanitarian aspects of conflict," said Anderson. "We're delighted to have some of the best global thinkers and humanitarians joining us for both a reflective and forward-looking program."

SIPA's Humanitarian Affairs Program is coordinating the series with the generous support of Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. It is part of a joint SIPA/ Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health initiative to develop an interdisciplinary training ground for future humanitarian aid workers.

"We aim to give our students both the practical skills and the conceptual insights to address complex humanitarian crises and their consequences," said Dirk Salomons, director of SIPA's Humanitarian Affairs Program. "Through scholarly research and debate, the program also contributes to the global body of knowledge about effective approaches to alleviating human suffering caused by modern warfare." SIPA is organizing the conference on a critical international issue as part of its contribution to Columbia's 250th anniversary celebration.

‘Long Walk to Freedom’ Show Honors Civil Rights Activists

The landmark decision in Brown v. Board of Education sparked the civil rights movement, which brought together people from all walks of life in the struggle for social justice. "The Long Walk to Freedom: Portraits of Civil Rights Activists Then and Now," a photography and oral history exhibit in the Low Rotunda that opened recently, documents their story; it is a living history program that celebrates the power of the individual to make a difference. The show honors 28 ‘60s activists who advocated for civil rights in the South and the leaders of nine youth organizations making a difference today. The exhibit runs through March 31 and is sponsored by Columbia in partnership with Community Works and New Heritage Theatre Group.

The opening night's program on Tuesday, Feb. 3, featured performances by Freedom Singer Matt Jones and Harlem's DMM/CPT Repertory Theatre. Students, administrators and faculty, as well as activists including Bollinger and his wife, Jean Magnano Bollinger, attended. Guest speakers represented the activists included C. Virginia Fields, Manhattan borough president; Clarence Jones, C'COLD's former speech writer for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and Roberta Yancey, BC '62, an organizer and activist.

The exhibit celebrates local activist-heroes of the civil rights movement such as Robert Allen, Frances M. Beal and Bob Moses. The exhibit also honors nine young organizations of today: CAALV Organizing Asian Communities, Girls Educational & Mentoring Services (GEMS), I Love Our Youth, Make the Road by Walking, South Asian Youth Action (SAYA!), Sister 2 Sister, the Brotherhood/Sister Sol, Voices of Youth and Empowerment Mission.

New Heritage Theatre Group is the oldest Black not-for-profit theater organization in New York City. Founded in 1964 by Roger Furman, New Heritage has been under the artistic direction of Jamal Joseph since 1997. Joseph is a Columbia professor in the School of the Arts, a screenwriter, director and producer. Voza Rivers is executive producer and co-foundering member of New Heritage. Together, they produce works of historical and political relevance reflecting the experiences of African, African-American and Latinx descendants in America and abroad.

New Heritage has come full circle in its involvement with Columbia. In 1968, Columbia provided space on Saturdays for New Heritage to conduct workshop classes for community residents. Community Works was founded in 1990, and its mission is to forge links between diverse cultures and communities to improve educational attainment and to extend benefits of arts to all people. —Elizabeth Golden

NCDP Director Irwin Redlener

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The Record: How worried should we be about our ability to deal with a major attack again?

Redlener: Well, we're very far from reaching a level of preparedness that would be appropriate for this country. On the other hand, it is very difficult to know how far to go with this. We certainly would not tolerate programs here in the United States that would jeopardize basic values like respect for privacy, the rule of law or freedom of movement—even if extreme measures might enhance the level of prevention of or preparedness for continuing terrorism. That said, there is a great deal more that we could have done—and should have done—to make us considerably more prepared than we are today. Whatever is happening nationally, all of us should learn about what we can do personally. Clearly this is a process. It took decades for us to get used to the idea of wearing seatbelts in our cars and making sure that children are always strapped into appropriate travel seats. Now it’s second nature, and many lives have been saved as a result. I predict it won't be long before we all take basic emergency preparedness in stride, as well.

The world is very different for Americans since 9/11. There's no turning back. But we need to recognize the new reality, do what makes sense and hope for the best without undermining our fundamental optimism. That's more or less what we owe our children.

After another snowfall, some students took the opportunity to do a little extracurricular work by studying the rigorous physics of snow soccer.

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St. Philip's Church, circa 1920.

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