

Integration during 1950's hits home: First African American student walks halls again

During a recent trip to Greensboro, GHS Alumnus Doctor Josephine Boyd Bradley recounts her experience as the first African American student to attend and graduate from Grimsley High School.

By Rachel Rodriguez & Hannah Wineburg
News Editors

May 17, 1954 marked one of the most important testimonies to the Civil Rights movement in the United States. On this particular spring day, the United States Supreme Court overturned the Plessy vs. Ferguson decision, which laid down the doctrine of "separate but equal" in schools.

The Brown vs. Topeka, Kansas Board of Education case eliminated all segregation in schools across the country and enforced integration for the upcoming fall semester.

The decision hit home in Greensboro, as Grimsley was among the many segregated schools of the time period. By the fall of 1957, Greensboro Senior High School (as named then) opened its doors, although with apparent hesitation, to its first and only African American student.

Dr. Josephine Boyd Bradley decided to finish her senior year at Greensboro Senior High instead of graduating from Dudley High School, where she had spent her first three years. Through her integrity and initiative, Bradley took her destiny into her own hands.



Leung Photo

Transferring from Dudley to Grimsley in the fall of 1957, Dr. Josephine Boyd Bradley paved the way for integration within the Greensboro public school system.

"It was my choice; I had the final say [regarding the transfer]," she said. "My parents were worried, of course; so was I...[but] it was supposed to happen that way; I was supposed to be the first. It was fate."

Reactions from students and teachers varied as integration took its course in Greensboro. Bradley recalled not having any fond memories of her one-year experience at Grimsley. She also mentioned that she never had friends at Grimsley as close as those she had while at Dudley.

"Some students were friendly, but overall I had very limited contact, and most of the kids just chose not to acknowledge me," she said.

"Teachers were up and down; some were supportive, and some made me want to disappear."

After graduating from Grimsley in 1958, Bradley attended Clark University in Massachusetts for two years. She then returned to North Carolina and spent her final two years of college at North Carolina Central University in Durham.

As Bradley walked the halls of Grimsley for the first time in many years, she discussed the continuing problems of diversity and racial separation that schools across the country have continued to experience into the 21st century.

"Things haven't changed that much," she said, regarding racial gaps between upper and lower classes. "It's a system designed to keep blacks in their place, even today."

Bullying, discipline problems become ubiquitous conflict plaguing school systems throughout country

Educational approaches have not necessarily changed regarding students with disciplinary problems, yet the administration is attempting to crack down on those students continuing to cause problems.

By Brian Gould
Staff Writer

Reports verify that bullying continually remains a problem in today's schools.

Bullying has existed as long as schools have been established. With students of

varying abilities and backgrounds, as well as society's competitive edge for popularity, bullying often occurs. One issue that arises in today's world is how such behavior affects others.

With infamous shootings at Columbine High School and other educational institutions across the country, teachers, parents, and students rightfully worry about school safety. Many experts believe the criminal behavior could have been prevented had adults and peers in close proximity to the juveniles taken closer notice to the perpetrators' behavior.

Ostracizing and taunting other students profoundly affects them both

psychologically and physiologically. Drastic circumstances can occur when the bullying is severe enough and either the bully or the victim is emotionally unstable. In some instances, the oppression toward a child may lead to the victim taking extreme action as well.

Even when bullying does not result in physical violence, this unacceptable behavior still must be controlled. According to a Kaiser Family Foundation survey, 86% of 12 to 15-year olds admit bullying takes place regularly at their schools. Such statistics rank higher than those ratings regarding smoking, drinking, or substance abuse.

The American Justice Department's study determined one out of four children is the victim of a bully, yet only 85% of the incidents receive intervention.

However, many students believe that bullying is not a concern at Grimsley.

"While I know bullying does take place at Grimsley, I do not think it is a major problem here. I think it is at other schools, but for the most part, people here are accepting of each other," said sophomore Molly Betton.

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