

1954 IN REVIEW

Supreme Court Outlaw of School Segregation Takes Spotlight In Year Of Historical Events

Selassie Steals Show; 2 Governors Snub Tubman

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Crime

Human emotion ran true to form in 1954 as the nation was shocked by some of the most brutal slayings in crime annals.

As 1954 began to pass into history, the spotlight was turned on Cleveland, Ohio, where handsome, young Dr. Samuel Sheppard awaited the verdict of a jury picked to decide if he was guilty of the brutal July 4 slaying of his pregnant wife, Marilyn. Dr. Sam proclaimed his innocence to the end but the jury found him guilty and he was sentenced to from 20 years to life.

In Chicago, violent and sudden death ended the stormy but glittering career of Shirley McClure, 28, popular young Chicago tavern owner and playgirl. She was hacked to death in her buffet apartment by a 25-year-old rejected suitor.

One of the most discussed crimes was the romantic triangle slaying of Walter Broomfield, wealthy tavern owner in the all-Negro suburb of Robbins, Ill., last July 10. Broomfield was slain in East St. Louis, Ill., by Manuel Cowlings when Broomfield found Cowling and Broomfield's wife together.

Walter Lee Irvin, 26, convicted participating in the rape of a white woman, was granted a dramatic 11th hour stay of execution.

Pretty Lynn Williams, 28-year-old grip teaser and interpretative dancer, was stabbed fatally by an unknown killer in her apartment in Oakland, Calif.

And in Chicago, a jealous dad of 10 shot a wealthy real estate operator to death, Arthur O'Neal, 34, said he killed Nathan Brodsky, 45, after he caught Brodsky and O'Neal's wife in an "uncompromising" position.

Rothwell B. Floyd, former prisoner in prison for POW camp crimes. He was freed of charges of murdering a fellow prisoner.

Pretty Mrs. Diane Wells took her own life with an overdose of sleeping pills rather than face trial for the murder of her wealthy husband.

Religion

The eyes of the world were focused on Evanston, Ill., last summer where thousands of religious leaders and laymen gathered for the second assembly of the World Council of Churches. World leaders declared that they want complete integration among the churches. Dr. Joseph H. Jackson, president of the National Baptist Convention, U. S. A., Inc., and AME bishop D. Ward Nichols, were named to the 90-member control committee of the World Council.

At least ten highly prominent religious leaders passed from the scene in 1954.

Final rites were held in February for the Right Rev. Randall A. Carter, 87, senior bishop of the CME church. Dr. Arthur Smith Jackson, 81, financial secretary of the AME church and Bishop Noah W. Williams 77, retired A. M. E. prelate.

Religious circles were saddened by the death of the beloved Dr. D. V. Jemison, for 13 years president of the National Baptist Convention, U. S. A., Inc. He was buried in Selma, Ala.

Bishop William Roberts, founder of the Church of God in Christ in Illinois, succumbed to a heart attack in May.

The Rev. R. A. Valentine, 74, archbishop and patriarch of the sixth Episcopal AMEZ district, died in Birmingham.

Death also claimed Dr. L. L. Berry, of New York, Secretary of Missions of the AME church, Bishop Lawrence Henry Hemingway, of the Second Episcopal district of the AME church, and Bishop A. H. Williams, 61, founder and senior prelate of the Christian Spiritual Association, U. S. A.

Two Baptist leaders were returned as head of their flocks. Dr. Joseph H. Jackson of Chicago was

band, Cecil, 51, prominent Alaskan businessman. She and Johnny Warren, a Negro jazz drummer, have been charged with murder in Wells' death.

A reign of terror on Chicago's Southside ended New Years Day 1954, with the arrest of Charles Townsend, 19-year-old confirmed dope addict. Townsend was charged with the slaying of four men with brickbats.

A "legal lynching" was executed in Alabama when Sheriff Jenkins A. Hill, of Clarke county, shot and killed Moses Jones, of Bessemer. Ala., who testified against Hill in a trial involving a protection racket for persons who sold liquor in Grove Hill, Ala. Hill claimed self-defense.

After President Eisenhower turned deaf ears on their pleas for clemency, Herman T. Dennis, 25, and Robert W. Burns, 36, were hanged on Guam Island for the 1948 murder of Miss Ruth Farnsworth 27, of San Francisco.

A love nest, involving teen-age girls and soldiers from Ft. Bragg, N. C., was broken up with the raiding of three Danville, Va. houses.

It happened in Mississippi! Robert Jones, an Illinois Central railroad hand, charged with the slaying of his white railroad foreman to break up an interracial love affair between his boss and Jones' wife, was freed of a murder rap by a Tunica grand jury.

Paul Crump, 23, doomed to die for the death of a plant guard, led a riot in Chicago's Cook County jail on the eve of his execution date. Crump didn't know a stay had been granted. He later foiled a jail break attempt by four other prisoners because he felt it would hurt his chances for appeal.

James Landis, a laborer for the Bureau of Engraving, engineered the daring theft of \$160,000 from the bureau. The loss was not discovered until early last January. Landis was later sentenced to from three to nine years and four others drew fines and jail sentences.

re-elected president of the National Baptist Convention, U. S. A., Inc., at the body's 74th annual session in St. Louis and Green L. Prince was swept into his 22nd term as president of the National Baptist Convention of America.

And out on the west coast, handsome Rev. John Brannan was having a different kind of trouble. He had been linked romantically with a former church secretary and a batch of "dirty records" were introduced to back up the charges. Brannan vehemently denied that his voice was on the record and that he was guilty of no wrongdoings. As he vowed to remain in the pulpit of St. Paul Baptist church until his death, the girl's father sued him for \$250,000 for "ruining" his daughter.

Delegates to the 22nd quadrennial session of the general convocation of the Southern Presbyterian church called upon its churches to end racial segregation and acted to end bias in three schools under its jurisdiction.

The Southern Baptist Convention, meeting at St. Louis, voted overwhelming support to the ban on segregation in public schools. The Rev. Henry A. Buchanan, 32, was ousted as pastor of Shelman, Ga. Baptist church after he urged his congregation to support

the Supreme Court decision outlawing racial segregation in public schools.

A fellow minister, Rev. Robert

Politics And Government

Nineteen-hundred and fifty-four marked a political milestone in the progress of the Negro. The country's powerful minority vote helped the Democratic party win back control in both the United States House of Representatives and the Senate. Perhaps the most significant of 1954 political gains was the election of Charles J. Diggs, Jr., of Detroit, as a representative to Congress. Diggs, son of a political veteran, soundly defeated Landon Knight Jr., son of Publisher John Knight. Diggs joins Reps. William L. Dawson of Chicago and Adam Clayton Powell of New York in the House of Representatives.

Also worthy of note was the appointment by President Dwight Eisenhower of Charles A. Mahoney, Detroit lawyer and insurance executive, as a delegate to the United Nations, the first Negro to be named a full delegate.

The year was marked by major and minor appointments as the Eisenhower administration passed out rewards for loyalty.

J. Ernest Wilkins, 60, well-known Chicago attorney, was named to the post of assistant secretary of labor. He later became the first Negro to sit in on a cabinet meeting at the White House.

Brig. Gen. Richard "Dick" Jones Chicago department store executive, succeeded Dr. John P. Davis as director of the United States Foreign Operations Administration mission to Liberia.

The post of consultant to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles went to John W. Roxborough III, of Detroit, and Joseph H. Douglas, of Washington, D. C., former Howard university professor, was named an assistant in the department of Health Education and Welfare.

Alvin M. Rucker, of Chicago, a specialist in the labor field, was named labor standards consultant in the Philippines by the Foreign Operations Administration.

Ralph Bunche, 1950 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, was promoted to the rank of deputy secretary general of the United Nations.

New York got its first depart-

Trotman, who lauded the decision during a sermon, was forced to resign from his church by the board of deacons.

ment chief in 1954 with the appointment of Arthur C. Ford as Commissioner of Water, Gas and Electricity.

Fred W. Martin of Hot Springs, Ark. made history in November by becoming the first member of his race elected to the city council.

Harry A. Cole, assistant attorney general of Maryland, unseated State Sen. Bernard S.M.Molincove of Baltimore, to become the first Negro Senator of Maryland.

Meanwhile across the ocean, charges of bribery were hurled at Kwame Nkrumah, prime minister of the Gold Coast.

William Belcher, 64, doorkeeper at the House of Representatives, became a hero when he wrested a gun from one of four Puerto Ricans who sprayed the House with bullets, injuring five Congressmen.

The eventful year bade farewell to one of the nation's leading state legislators, Rep. Charles J. Jenkins. Often called the dean of Negro legislators, Jenkins died in Chicago early in December. He spent 24 years in the Illinois Legislature.

Death, too, ended the brilliant and militant political career of Edgar G. Brown, Republican and director of the National Negro Council. Brown suffered a heart attack and died when his station wagon crashed into a utility pole in Chicago's Washington park. Brown was "in the saddle" until the last — he was campaigning for Gen. Julius Klein, who was seeking the Republican nomination as Senator from Illinois.

The minus side of the ledger of the political ledger was rocked by a scandal. As the year drew to a close, Frederick P. Wall, former secretary to U. S. Rep. William L. Dawson, was fighting a bribery conviction. And in New York, Mrs. Mattie Freeman Dodson, confidential secretary to Rep. Adam Clayton Powell, and her husband, Howard, a choir leader, were indicted by a federal grand jury for income tax fraud.

A fourth bribery indictment against Alderman Ben Oliver of St. Louis was voted by the Circuit Court grand jury.

Race Relations

In a year marked by strained race relations, Madame Marjorie Stewart Joyner, a leading beautician, led a contingent of almost 200 to Europe last summer to climax the beauticians convention. The trip did much to cement good race and international relations.

On the distaff side, the Howard University glee club was barred by police from the fourth annual Lincoln Day Box Supper and the only Negro contribution turned out to be a blackface routine by a white drummer. He later apologized for the blunder.

Paul I. Phillips, executive secretary of the Grand Rapids, Mich. Urban League, spurned a \$9,600 post in the department of Health, Education and Welfare because of the "rigid pattern of segregation" which exists in Washington.

Congressman Adam Clayton Powell demanded the ouster of Mrs. Oveta Culp Hobby, secretary of Health Education and Welfare, charging she upholds racial bias. Paul G. Hoffman, former administrator of the Economic Cooperation Administration, was presented the George Washington Carver Memorial Institute's annual Gold Medal award for "outstanding contributions to the betterment of race relations and human welfare."

Julius Thomas, of the National Urban League, charged United States Steel with discrimination against Negro employees and segregation at Fairless Homes, the company's housing project. The company later hired a Negro technician.

The Donald Howards, victims of vile words and bombs in the night, decided in May that they couldn't

take Trumbull Park any longer and quit.

Leon Marsh of New York City was named by 1,000 YMCA secretaries from the United States and Canada to head the 3,700 member organization at their 52nd Triennial conference, the first Negro to head the organization in its 83 year history.

Thurgood Marshall, of New York City, the nation's top civil rights lawyer, received the coveted Robert S. Abbott award for his work to advance the principles of American democracy.

An 18-year-old Latvian displaced person, Imantis Plinksis, was unmasked as the leader of an anti-Negro hate gang.

A feud between Judge Irvin C. Mollison and Urban League Executive Secretary Lester Granger broke into the open late in June. The split centered around the policy of the 44-year-old organization, which Granger accused Mollison and others of trying to discredit.

Later Granger quit as a consultant to the Navy on social problems because of Navy's failure to realize the urgency of elimination of racial segregation in its ranks.

Charles Vernon Bush, 14, was appointed a page in the United States Supreme Court, first Negro to be named to the post in history.

Howard Hosmer, an examiner for the Interstate Commerce Commission, urged the Commerce Commission to ban segregation in interstate travel. His stand was opposite to that of Isadore Freidson, another ICC examiner, who held there was no Constitutional provision or Federal law which prohibits "reasonable segregation" of white and Negro passengers traveling interstate.



MISS BETTY JANE Samuels introduces herself to the blackboard to her all white class at the Wheatley school

in Washington, D. C., as public schools in the nation's capital were integrated in compliance with Supreme Court

edict declaring segregation in public schools unconstitutional. Date of the momentous ruling was May 17, 1954.

Education

The most momentous drama in human relations since the Emancipation Proclamation came to a climax May 17 when the U. S. Supreme Court unanimously outlawed racial segregation in the public schools as a violation of the Constitutional guarantee of equality to all. The decision was at outgrowth of the schools cases brought before the court by the NAACP.

Border states began the task of integration almost immediately. Southern states, reluctant to break with tradition, sought to devise means of circumventing the decision.

A Supreme Court hearing to weigh methods of carrying out the order was delayed after the death of one of the justices.

In some cities integration was effected with hardly a ruffle. In others the fires of hatred were fanned by Bryant Bowles, 34, a former marine and founder of the National Association for the Advancement of White People.

Under Bowles' cunning direction, rioting broke out in Baltimore, Milford, Del., and Washington, D. C. However officials refused to be stampeded into panic and brought the situation under control.

A revolt by 200 angry citizens in Phillippi Va., followed the assignment of a white teacher and a dozen white students to what had been an all-Negro school.

Amid all the confusion it was revealed that the eldest son of Gov. and Mrs. Allan Shivers of Texas had for two years been attending a school in which there is no racial segregation policy. Saint Edwards university school.

In at least one instance segregation went into reverse. A dozen white persons who applied for admission to Virginia State were denied admittance. Dr. Robert P. Daniel, president, explained it was because of segregation laws in the state.

This action, however, was balanced by Lincoln University (Mo.) which opened its doors and welcomed several white students.

Mississippians voted 2-1 to abolish their public school system rather than yield to a Supreme Court decision calling for an end to racially segregated schools. The legislators of South Carolina and Georgia had already taken action to prevent mixing in their schools.

Defense Secretary Charles Wilson fixed Sept. 1, 1955, as the specific date for termination of segregation in schools on 21 military

posts. The Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Antonio ordered an immediate end to segregation and discrimination in the parochial schools.

The United States District court for the western district of Louisiana ordered Southwestern Louisiana Institute at Lafayette to admit four Negro students.

Most Rev. William L. Adrian, bishop of the Roman Catholic diocese of Nashville, issued a directive ending racial segregation in all parochial schools in Nashville and Davidson County.

H. Byron Masterson, president of the Lincoln university (Mo.) board of curators, announced that the university's law school at St. Louis would close after the 1954-55 term — the victim of growing integration in education.

Dr. Arthur M. Jackson was elected a member of the East St. Louis, Ill., board of education, the first Negro to attain this honor in Illinois' third largest city.

Mary G. Howard, 24, became the first white student to receive a degree from Fisk university since 1893.

Dr. Huey J. Battle became the first Negro to earn the PhD degree from Oklahoma A and M college during summer convocation ceremonies.

Dr. Aaron Brown was ousted as president of Albany State college when the Georgia board of regents refused to renew his contract, allegedly for political reasons.

Dr. Margaret Just Butcher was a constant thorn in the side of the Washington, D. C. school board, which wanted to go slow on integration.

Final rites for Dr. Alain Locke, noted education, were held in New York. Dr. Locke died in June. Mrs. Lillian D. Jenkins, of Bristol, Tenn., became the first Negro to graduate from the University of Tennessee since the school graduate division was opened to Negroes in 1952.

Dr. Charles Leander Hill, in October, vigorously denied he had resigned as president of Wilberforce university and sharply criticized AME Bishop D. Ward Nichols for "unofficially" appointing another "president," Dr. Gilbert Jones. Dr. Hill reportedly had resigned his position at the AME church school upon pressure resulting from his accusing Bishop Nichols of withholding \$8,000 earmarked annually by the church for the university.

Foreign

Far-away places ceased to have strange sounding names as many of them were daily on the lips of awakening Americans.

Col. John C. Robinson, a Chicagoan who won fame as the "Brown Condor" and Emperor Haile Selassie's number one pilot, died in March of injuries sustained in a plane crash near Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Colonel Robinson met his death a few months before Selassie, the "Conquering Lion of Judah," embarked on a tour of the United States, Mexico and Canada. The Emperor's visit did much to boost the stock of Ethiopia over the world.

Another visitor from across the sea was William V. S. Tubman, president of Liberia, Africa's only Negro republic. He toured the United States at the personal invitation of President Eisenhower. Govs. Herman Talmadge of Georgia and Gordon Persons of Alabama were conspicuously among the missing when Tubman visited their states.

The former Peggy Cripps and her husband, Joseph Appiah, Gold Coast prince, announced the birth of a son.

Dr. Namdi Azikiwe, Lincoln University (Pa.) educated, was elected prime minister of Eastern Nigeria.

Hurricane Hazel, the year's most destructive storm, ripped through Haiti in October leaving death and destruction in its wake before roaring on to cause millions of more dollars damage in the United States and take more lives.

Human Relations

A veteran fighter for human rights passed from the scene in 1954. Dr. Mary Church Terrell, 80, died in an Annapolis, Md., hospital. She was active to the end.

The 1953 Spingarn Medal for distinguished achievement was presented to Dr. T. K. Lawless, noted Chicago dermatologist.

Thurgood Marshall, NAACP chief legal counsel, won the Emerald Cross of Malta, top award of the Philadelphia Cotillion Society.

Dr. Percy Julian, noted scientist, defied new threats warning him to give up his home in the exclusive Chicago suburb of Oak Park. Julian's three children were threatened.

General

Names made news in 1954. Charles P. Browning, advertising director of the Chicago Defender and vice president of Defender publications, died in January of injuries sustained when he was hit by an airplane propeller at Little Rock, Ark. Browning was also connected with the National Baptist Convention, Inc., U. S. A.

Clement Vandage, 51, insurance company official, took his life by jumping from the Huey Long bridge in New Orleans. It spans the Mississippi.

Jay Jackson, nationally known syndicated Defender publications cartoonist, died at his studio home of a heart attack. Jackson was 49.

The Ancient Egyptian Arabic Order, Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, was declared a "separate and distinct" organization from the Prince Hall Masons in a 35-page report by Daniel D. Carmell, special master in chancery, to the U. S. District Court in Chicago. The court battle was set off when Raymond E. Jackson, imperial potentate of the Shrine, asked the court to issue an injunction restraining all Illinois masons from obeying an edict issued by F. Curtis Rogan, grand master of the Illinois Prince Hall grand lodge.

Raymond E. Jackson, imperial potentate of the Ancient Egyptian Arabic Order, Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, was unanimously re-elected at the 53rd annual convention in Atlantic City.

Dr. Rivers Frederick, 80, eminent physician, surgeon and businessman, was buried in New Orleans. He succumbed after a brief illness.

Rivers Frederick II, 14-year-old son of the late Dr. Rivers Frederick, was elected a director of the Louisiana Life Insurance company.

Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., a graduate of West Point, was promoted to the temporary rank of general in the air force.

Labor

Thousands felt the job pinch in 1954 but as the year drew to a close things were almost back to normal.

The 16th Constitutional Convention of the CIO, meeting in Los Angeles, voted unanimously to merge with the AFL.

Walter Reuther and the CIO demanded that the 84th Congress pass a federal Fair Employment Practices code to "end the basic problem of America"—racial discrimination. The convention also passed a strong resolution on civil rights.

An all-out war to end racial discrimination in the Big-Four railroad brotherhoods was launched in November with the filing of a suit in the Federal court in Cleveland. The Provisional Committee Organized Colored Locomotive Firemen is headed by A. Phillip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

The Pullman company agreed to a plan which would place Negro conductors and white porters on Pullman trains, to change a 90-year-old hiring policy.

James B. Carey, secretary-treasurer of the CIO, told the national convention of the N. A. A. C. P. meeting in Dallas, Texas, in June, that the practical effect of eliminating public school segregation will be negated so long as non-white families are denied residence in any neighborhood in which they can afford to live.

And James P. Mitchell, U. S. secretary of Labor, speaking at the 44th annual convention of the Urban League in Pittsburgh, declared that "Job discrimination not only results in the loss of manpower but also in the loss of national morale and character."

In Springfield, Ohio, 15-year-old Ronald Cole, became the first citizen in that city of 80,000 to receive the American Legion Heroism award. He single-handedly rescued five small neighborhood children from their blazing home on Sept. 26, when fire broke out.

An African Prince, Ankrah of the Gold Coast, and an actor, Charles Banks, 43, started the year by taking white brides. Ankrah exchanged vows with Sinitta Toivonen, 17, of Finland; and Banks, a former board member of the American Guild of Variety Artists, took twice-wed brides Helen Leiderorf Grumbach and Sonnehom. Ankrah and Sinitta had gone their separate ways.