Paths to Equality

Courts, leaders, and communities in Oklahoma

OKH.C.8 "Investigate how post-war social, political, and economic events continued to transform the state of Oklahoma from the 1950s through the present. Evaluate the progress of the Civil Rights Movement in Oklahoma by describing the goals..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline what each court required, circle actions people took outside court, and put a star beside one result of each approach. Use your marks to compare how change happened.

Changing the Rules, Changing Daily Life

1 In 1946, Ada Lois Sipuel applied to the University of Oklahoma law school, which barred Black students. She sued, arguing that Oklahoma could not deny her an education available to white applicants. In *Sipuel v. Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma* (1948), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the state had to provide her a legal education on equal terms and without delay. Oklahoma first tried a separate law school; Sipuel later entered OU's law school. The ruling forced state officials to confront the meaning of equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment.

2 George McLaurin entered OU's graduate school in 1948, but officials separated him from white classmates in classrooms, the library, and the cafeteria. In *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education* (1950), the Supreme Court found that these restrictions harmed his ability to learn and exchange ideas. Equal protection, the justices concluded, did not permit such unequal treatment inside the same school. Governor Raymond Gary, elected after these rulings, supported the orderly integration of Oklahoma's public schools during his 1955 to 1959 term. Court decisions set legal requirements, but state and local leaders still had to put them into practice.

3 Students and adult supporters also pressed for change outside court. Beginning in 1958, Clara Luper and young members of the NAACP held nonviolent sit-ins at Oklahoma City lunch counters that refused to serve Black customers. They sat, requested service, and returned despite hostility; some businesses ended segregation. School districts took different paths. Tulsa voluntarily integrated Booker T. Washington High School by attracting students of different races, while Oklahoma City Public Schools delayed full desegregation and faced a federal lawsuit and court-ordered changes. Together, these examples show that rulings, public leadership, and sustained community action shaped equality, but progress was neither automatic nor uniform.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Sipuel's lawsuit challenge Oklahoma's treatment of Black applicants, and what did the Supreme Court require?

2. Why did the Supreme Court reject McLaurin's treatment even though he had been admitted to graduate school?

3. How did Governor Gary's approach to integration differ from Clara Luper's group's approach?

4. Compare Tulsa's and Oklahoma City Public Schools' paths to desegregation. What happened in each district?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four sentences advising a 1970s school board that has delayed integration. Propose two actions modeled on different approaches in the passage, explain how one court ruling supports ending separation, and predict one obstacle.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline what each court required, circle actions people took outside court, and put a star beside one result of each approach. Use your marks to compare how change happened. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Sipuel's lawsuit challenge Oklahoma's treatment of Black applicants, and what did the Supreme Court require?	**Sipuel challenged the denial of a legal education available to white applicants. The Court required Oklahoma to provide her a legal education on equal terms and without delay.**
2	Why did the Supreme Court reject McLaurin's treatment even though he had been admitted to graduate school?	**Separating him from classmates in classrooms and shared spaces harmed his ability to learn and exchange ideas, violating equal protection.**
3	How did Governor Gary's approach to integration differ from Clara Luper's group's approach?	**Gary supported the orderly integration of public schools as governor. Luper's group used repeated, nonviolent lunch-counter sit-ins to challenge segregation by businesses.**
4	Compare Tulsa's and Oklahoma City Public Schools' paths to desegregation. What happened in each district?	**Tulsa voluntarily integrated Booker T. Washington High School by attracting students of different races. Oklahoma City Public Schools delayed full desegregation and faced a federal lawsuit and court-ordered changes.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Create a voluntary program that attracts students of different races to the same school. Work with local civil rights groups to build public support for the change. The McLaurin ruling shows that separating students inside one school can deny them equal opportunities to learn. Some families may resist the plan, so the board will need to keep working toward integration.

Accept different feasible actions if they reflect distinct approaches in the passage. The response should accurately connect a ruling to equal protection and name a plausible obstacle.