



# **SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS**

**November 7, 2019**



# Visit to Charlottesville High School October 15, 2019

**WVIR NBC29**  
1 hr · 🌐

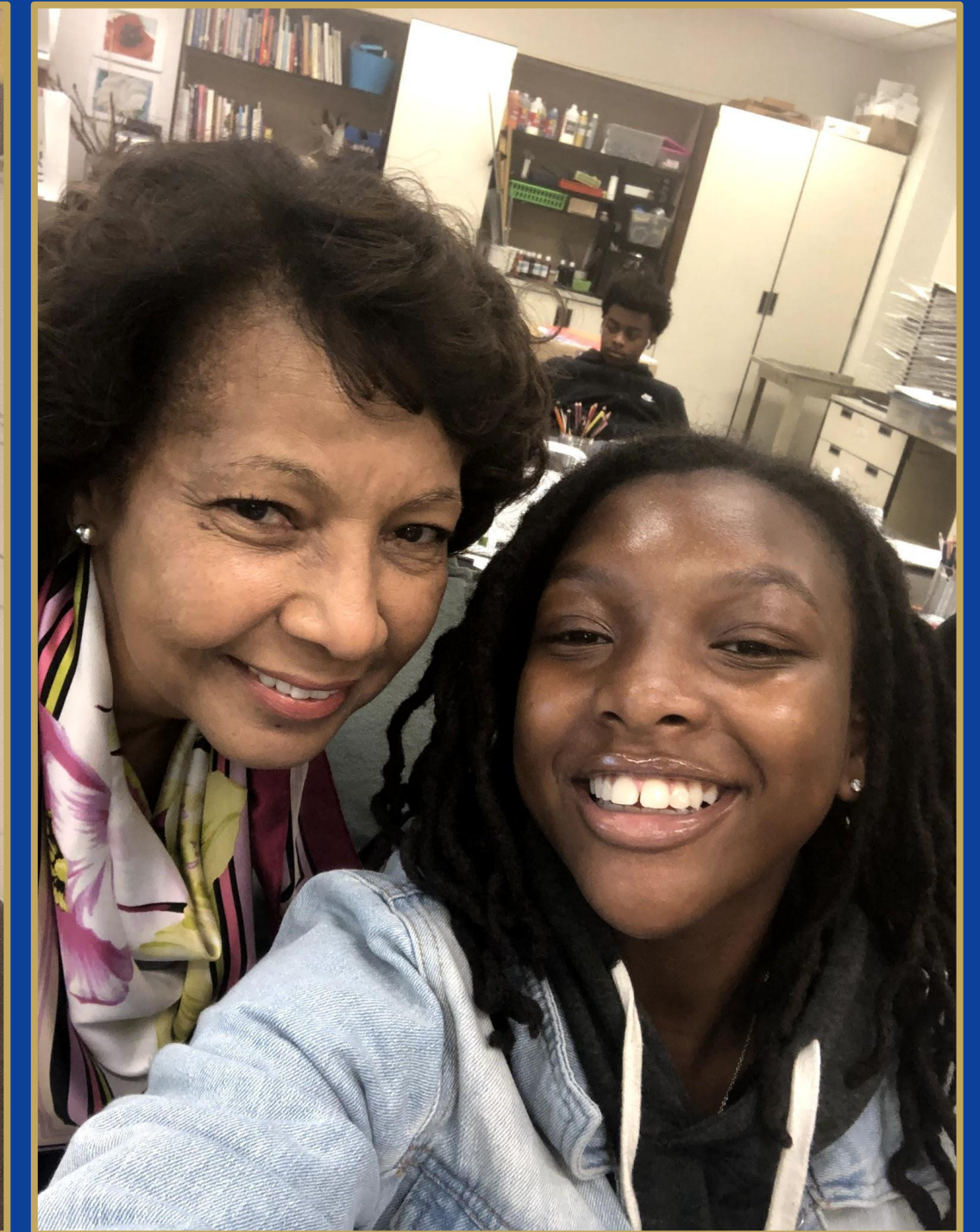
#Watch Dejua Lewis, a CHS student with a passion for cooking, is now serving meals in her own restaurant. <http://ht.ly/PMNZ30pQQGM>



NBC 29  
6:35 47'

**NBC29.COM**  
**CHS Student Running Albemarle County Restaurant**  
Dejua Lewis, a Charlottesville High School student with a passion

Tyler Sewell  
Walter Sprouse  
Amaya Clark  
Antonio Childre  
Devin Mosley  
Phyllis Hunt W  
Ashley Lowery  
Shaquawn K B  
and 147 more.

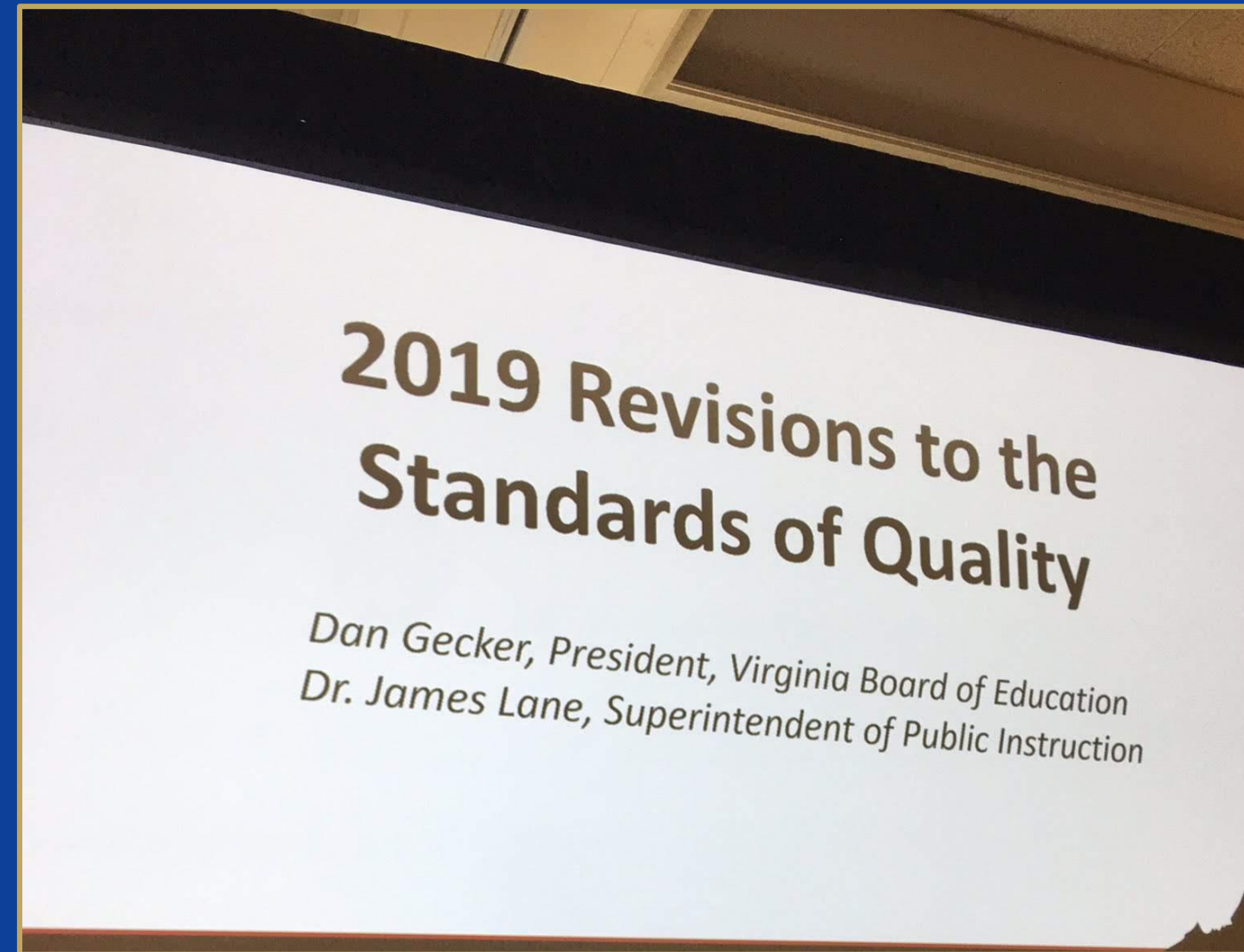




# Fall 2019 VASS Conference



Secretary of Education Atif Qarni

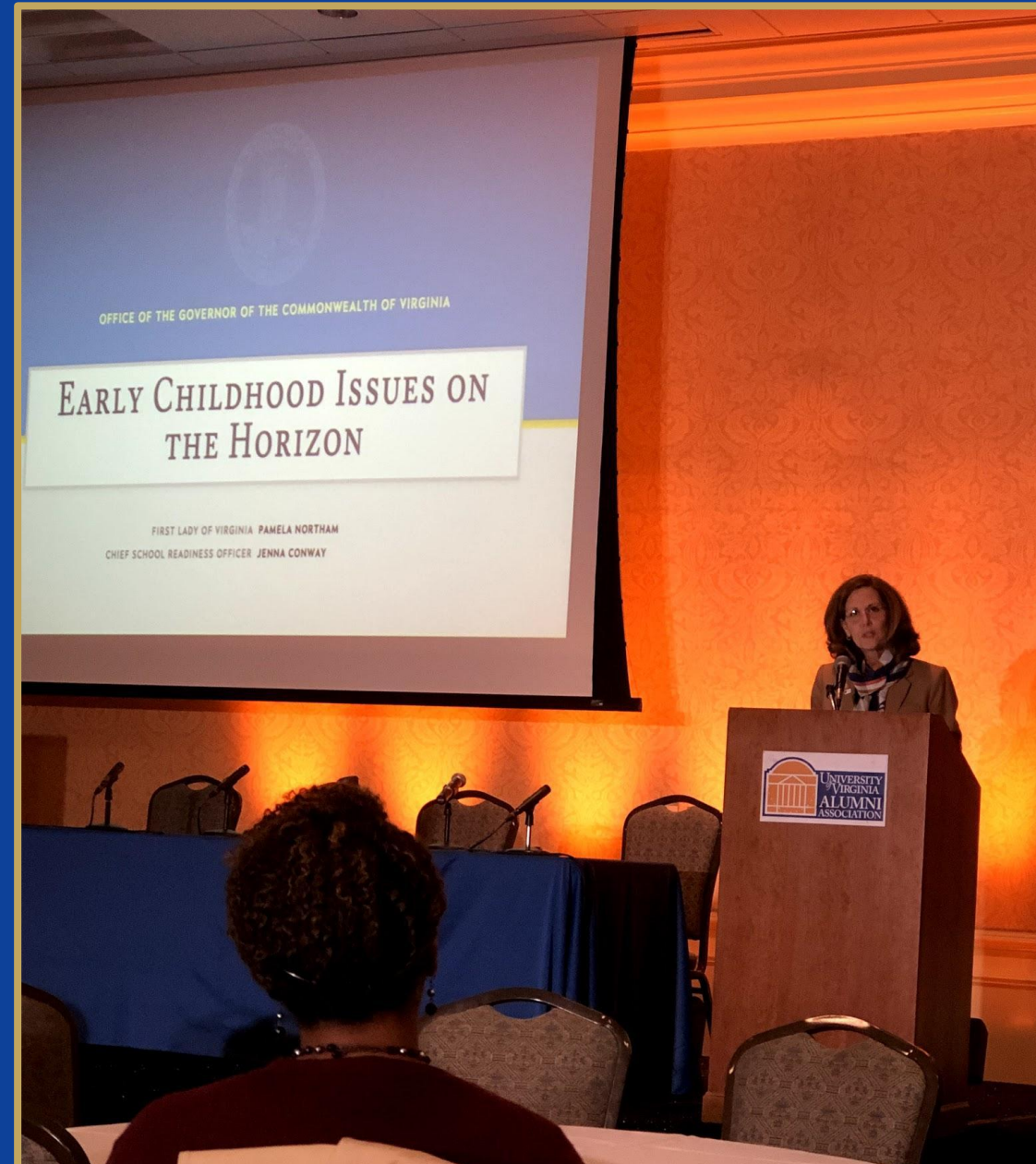


2019 National Teacher of the Year  
Rodney Robinson

On October 20-22, 2019, the Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS) hosted its Fall 2019 Conference combined with the Governor's Early Childhood Education Policy Summit.



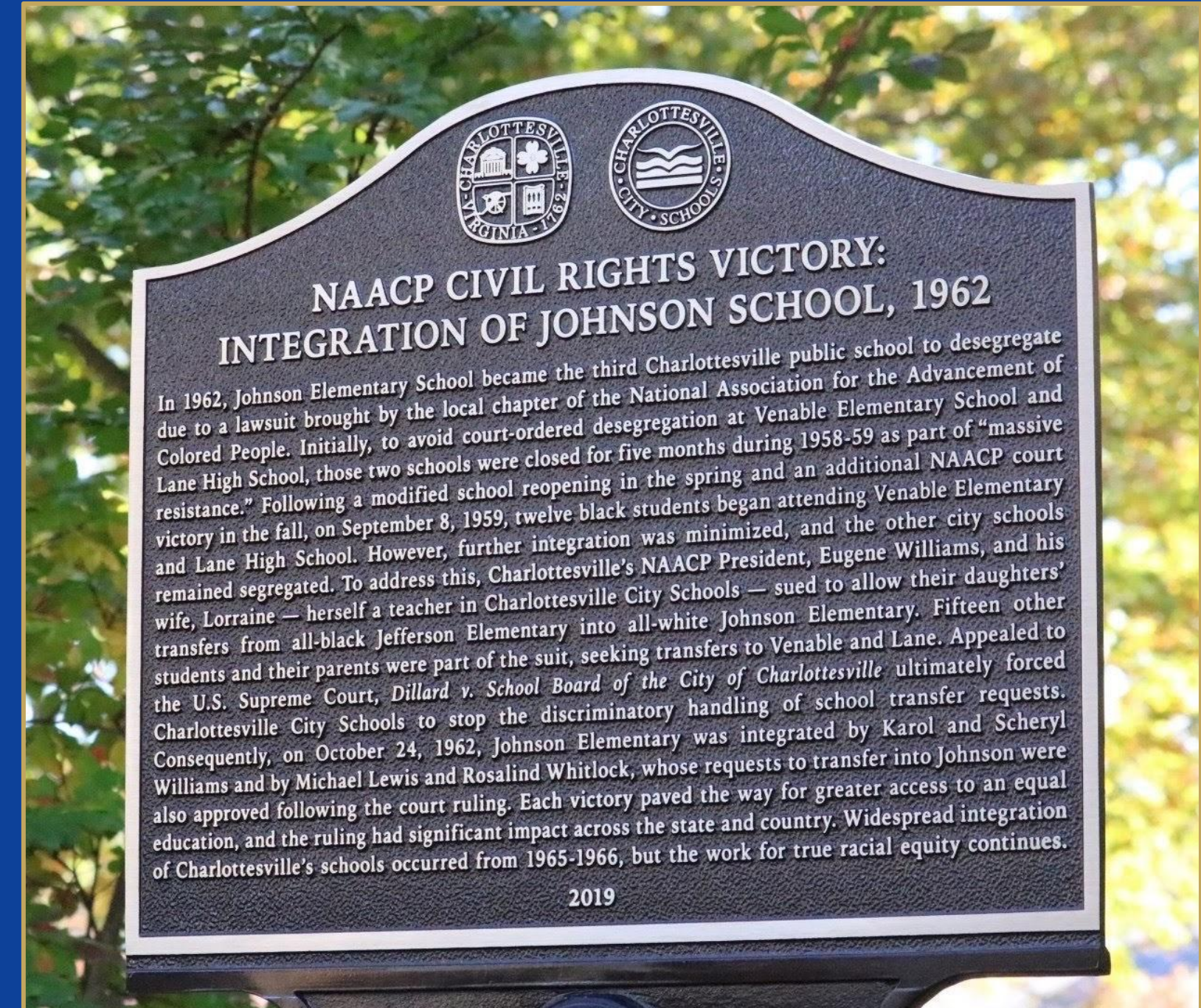
# Early Childhood Education Policy Summit



On October 22, 2019, First Lady Pamela Northam and the Office of the Secretary of Education hosted a summit on Early Childhood Education Policy. Education leaders, policymakers, and academic researchers at the University of Virginia discussed early childhood education in the Commonwealth.



# Honoring the Trailblazers Who Desegregated Johnson School



On Wednesday, October 23, 2019, representatives from Charlottesville City Schools and City Council honored Eugene and Lorraine Williams and hosted a Historic Plaque Dedication at Johnson Elementary School. A special thank you to Beth Cheuk, Charlene Green, and Annie Evans for their work.



# Honoring the Trailblazers Who Desegregated Johnson School

THE CITY OF CHARLOTTESVILLE AND CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY SCHOOLS  
INVITE YOU TO  
**HONOR THE TRAILBLAZERS**  
WHO  
**DESEGREGATED JOHNSON SCHOOL**  
HISTORIC PLAQUE DEDICATION, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2019  
JOHNSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, 1645 CHERRY AVENUE

**CHARLOTTESVILLE - ALBEMARLE  
TRIBUNE**  
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1962

**FIRST OF THEIR RACE TO ATTEND JOHNSON SCHOOL—**  
The four children pictured here are shown making their first entry into Johnson Elementary School on Cherry Avenue, hitherto serving an all-white student body. They are, left to right, Karol Williams, Michael Lewis, Roslyn Whitlock, and Scheryl Williams. Nine others were enrolled this week at Venable which has been desegregated since 1960. "Everything went all right."

School Superintendent F. R. Ellis, said Wednesday. These children were among 15 who were notified earlier this week they might attend the city's formerly all-white school, after the Supreme Court declined to continue a stay of the order calling for their admission to these schools, handed down by the U.S. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals on September 17.

—R. Payne Photo.

COURTESY Special Collections, University of Virginia Library.  
THANKS ALSO to the Albemarle Charlottesville Historical Society for assistance with images.

**We honor the judges who made wise decisions that allowed all students to learn together.**

We honor the teachers and school leaders who worked to support these young people who were brave enough to be the first black students at Johnson School.

**We celebrate that a few years later, all of the Charlottesville City Schools taught both black and white students together. We celebrate that now our schools have students from many races who come to us from all over the world.**

We know that the best way to honor yesterday's heroes is to make tomorrow better for everyone.

Reflections by (or honoring) the Students who Desegregated Johnson School

Michael Lewis *(entered grade 2)*  
Rosalind Whitlock *(entered grade 4)*  
Karol Williams *(entered grade 7)*  
Scheryl Williams Glanton *(entered grade 5)*

Proclamation in Honor of Eugene and Lorraine Williams ..... Charlottesville City Council  
Apology ..... Charlottesville Superintendent and School Board  
Reflections by Eugene Williams  
*Then-president of the Charlottesville National Association for the Advancement of Colored People*  
"Wind Beneath My Wings" ..... James Bryant, Member, Charlottesville City School Board  
Concluding Remarks ..... Dr. Rosa S. Atkins, Superintendent, Charlottesville City Schools

**TEXT ON HISTORIC MARKER**

NAACP CIVIL RIGHTS VICTORY:  
INTEGRATION OF JOHNSON SCHOOL, 1962

In 1962, Johnson Elementary School became the third Charlottesville public school to desegregate due to a lawsuit brought by the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Initially, to avoid court-ordered desegregation at Venable Elementary School and Lane High School, those two schools were closed for five months during 1958-59 as part of "massive resistance." Following a modified school reopening in the spring and an additional NAACP court victory in the fall, on September 8, 1959, twelve black students began attending Venable Elementary and Lane High School. However, further integration was minimized and the other city schools remained segregated. To address this, Charlottesville's NAACP President Eugene Williams and his wife Lorraine — herself a teacher in Charlottesville City Schools — sued to allow their daughters' transfer from all-black Jefferson Elementary into all-white Johnson Elementary. Fifteen other students and their parents were part of the suit, seeking transfers to Venable and Lane. Appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, *Dillard v. School Board of the City of Charlottesville* ultimately forced Charlottesville City Schools to stop the discriminatory handling of school transfer requests. Consequently, on October 24, 1962, Johnson Elementary was integrated by Karol and Scheryl Williams and by Michael Lewis and Rosalind Whitlock, whose requests to transfer into Johnson were also approved following the court ruling. Each victory paved the way for greater access to an equal education, and the ruling had significant impact across the state and country. Widespread integration of Charlottesville's schools occurred from 1965-1966, but the work for true racial equity continues.

**PLAQUE UNVEILING**

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2019, 1:00 P.M.  
ENTRANCE TO JOHNSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Welcome ..... Charlene Green, Manager, Office of Human Rights, City of Charlottesville  
Unveiling the Historic Marker ..... Eugene Williams and Family  
Reading the Historic Marker ..... Jennifer McKeever, Chair, Charlottesville City School Board  
Opportunity for Photographs and Interviews

**DEDICATION CEREMONY**

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2019, 1:30 P.M.  
JOHNSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

Welcome ..... Summerlyn Thompson, Principal, Johnson Elementary School  
Greetings ..... Nikayah Walker, Mayor, City of Charlottesville  
"Hail to James G. Johnson School" ..... Fourth-Graders, Johnson Elementary School  
History Reading ... Briana Moore, Deshawna Timmons, & Tamarius Washington, Charlottesville High School  
Leader 1: Please help us tell the history of Charlottesville City Schools by reading the **lines in bold**.  
Leader 2: We know that until 1959, white and black students were segregated in our schools.  
**Group (bold): We honor those black families and students who first integrated Venable Elementary and Lane High School in September 1959.**  
Leader 3: We know that progress often comes slowly and there is great resistance to change.  
**We know that in the next few years, very few additional black students were allowed in white schools and no additional schools allowed black and white children to learn together.**  
We recognize Mr. Eugene Williams for leading the Charlottesville chapter of the NAACP. We honor his urgent desire to give all students equal opportunities in our schools.  
**We recognize Mrs. Lorraine Williams for helping Charlottesville City Schools. She was a teacher, a risk-taker, and a change-maker.**  
We honor Mr. and Mrs. Williams for including their own daughters, Karol and Scheryl, in a lawsuit to demand that black and white children could learn together.  
**We honor Floyd and Doris Lewis. They asked the schools to allow their son Michael to attend Johnson. They wanted the schools to be better for their son and all sons.**  
We honor George and Rosetta Whitlock. They asked the schools to allow their daughter Rosalind to attend Johnson. They wanted the schools to be better for their daughter and all daughters.

**TIMELINE**

WITH APPRECIATION TO ANN WICKS CARTER, WHO INITIALLY DEVELOPED THIS TIMELINE FOR THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VENABLE AND LANE DESEGREGATION IN 2009.

1954: Supreme Court rules in *Brown v. Board of Education* that racial segregation of children in public schools is unconstitutional.

1955: Families of black students in Charlottesville apply for transfer to white schools and are denied.

1956: Black families sue the Charlottesville School Board for access to white schools, and the U.S. District Court orders Charlottesville to integrate Venable Elementary and Lane High School.

1957: The U.S. Supreme Court refuses to hear the Charlottesville School Board's appeal, leaving the lower court's ruling in place.

1958: The U.S. District Court orders ten black students to Venable and two to Lane, but instead of complying, the two schools are closed and private schools open to teach white students.

FEBRUARY 4, 1959: Lane and Venable reopen with an inadequate approach to desegregation: Twelve black students receive tutoring in the School Board Office in the Venable Annex building. Olivia Ferguson, one of the young plaintiffs, is denied a true high school diploma and the opportunity to graduate with her peers.

SEPTEMBER 5, 1959: The U.S. District Court again orders the desegregation of Charlottesville Schools, now with three students to Lane and nine to Venable.

SEPTEMBER 8, 1959: The "Charlottesville 12" desegregate Venable and Lane without incident.

1960: School administrators allow only a few additional black students into Venable and Lane, bringing the total number to 20. All other transfer requests of black families are denied. Spearheaded by then-president Eugene Williams, Charlottesville's NAACP leads a legal challenge to the handling of school transfers. Mrs. Lorraine Williams, a teacher in Charlottesville City Schools, risks her job by including their two daughters in the lawsuit.

1961: School administrators again minimize black students transferring into white schools, limiting the total number of black students in white schools to 36. Venable and Lane remain the only two desegregated schools.

1962: U.S. Court of Appeals rules in *Dillard v. School Board of the City of Charlottesville* that the schools have discriminated in their handling of transfer requests. The court orders additional students' transfers to be approved at Lane, Venable, and Johnson Elementary School. The U.S. Supreme Court refuses to review the case, leaving the lower court's ruling in place.

OCTOBER 24, 1962: Due to the court order, additional students begin attending Lane and Venable, and four black students desegregate Johnson Elementary School. At Johnson, two of the students — Karol and Scheryl Williams — are approved through the lawsuit, and two — Michael Lewis and Rosalind Whitlock — are separately approved to transfer on the basis of the court ruling.

1963-64: The Dillard case has limited immediate impact on Charlottesville school enrollment, but it is seen as the last resistance to local school desegregation. The case is cited across Virginia and in other states to end discriminatory practices.

1963: Raymond Bell becomes the first black person appointed to the Charlottesville City School Board.

1965-66: All Charlottesville City Schools are completely desegregated.

1967-TODAY: The work for true racial equity continues.



# Bus Driver Appreciation Week

## October 21-25, 2019



On Friday, October 25, 2019, Charlottesville City Schools hosted a breakfast in honor of Bus Driver Appreciation Week. Thank you to all of our bus drivers!!



# Commission on African American History Education



On Monday, October 28, 2019, Community leaders gathered at the University of Virginia for the first meeting of the Commission on African American History Education. The commission will review Virginia's history standards and practices and make recommendations for enriched standards related to African American history. The group will also offer recommendations on what support is needed to ensure cultural competency among teachers.

# Southern Education Foundation Racial Equity Leadership Network



**RELN Cohort 3 Session 2  
November 3-6, 2019**

The Racial Equity Leadership Network is an 18-Month fellowship program for Executive Leaders in districts who are committed to addressing persistent disparities in their systems and ensuring that race and class are no longer the most reliable predictors of student success.