3-5-1966

UA8/3/3/9 Mr. Thomas re: Integration

Thomas

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Western Kentucky University
UA8/3 Information Technology / Educational Television
Subseries 3 WKYU Production Services
Item 9 Mr. Thomas re: Integration

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Description: Mr. Thomas of Caverna High School discusses integration of Kentucky schools at a meeting in Princeton, Kentucky.

Date: March 5, 1966

Formats: 1 audiotape, 1 wav file, 1 mp3 file

Subject Analytics:
African Americans
Blacks
Education
History
Integration

Digital Commons Classification:
African American Studies
Communication
Race and Ethnicity
Race, Ethnicity and Post-Colonial Studies
Secondary Education
Social and Behavioral Sciences

Accession Information: These records transferred to the WKU Archives in accordance with the records retention schedule.

Access Restrictions: none

Preferred Citation: UA8/3/3/9 Mr. Thomas re: Integration, WKU Archives, Bowling Green, Kentucky, USA.

Processing Information: Indexed 2018.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media ID</th>
<th>Side</th>
<th>Start time</th>
<th>Subject</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audiotape</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>00:00:00</td>
<td>Unidentified man giving introduction. Speaks briefly about segregated basketball tournaments of the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiotape</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>00:00:41</td>
<td>A Dr. Clark makes remarks about the last meeting and discussion of integration issues. Introduces Dr. Morris Osborne, director of the Educational Center for School Desegregation at Western Kentucky University. Introduction of Mr. Thomas, African American teacher of science and math at Caverna High School. The first African American in Kentucky to teach white children. Selected by Governor Bert Combes to serve on commission on integration with Ned Breathitt. Continues to serve on commission under Governor Breathitt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiotape</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>00:03:57</td>
<td>Mr. Thomas discusses Princeton connections and basketball players Dwight Smith and Clem Haskins. He states that he is here to discuss problems related to integration and shares his personal experiences in the Caverna School System.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiotape</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>00:06:04</td>
<td>Mr. Thomas gives a brief history of integration of Caverna School District. Thomas &amp; the superintendent made effort for interpreting the Supreme Court ruling that separate not equal. Thomas was a student at the University of Kentucky in a class on intergroup relations, which he felt would be helpful in making proposals for Caverna. We have no set formula for integration, because every community has its own issues. They can be resolved better by the individual communities than by outsiders. Disposal of property, teacher problems and open communication were issues. Appointed a committee of lay and educators that studied the issue for two years. At first they decided to integrate just the high school. They decided to integrate the entire school system two years after the local teachers association had been integrated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiotape</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>00:09:00</td>
<td>Teacher problem, worked out on ratio basis, African Americans to white students. Some of these issues have been resolved by legislation since then. During the two years they would interchange programs between black and white schools. Musical programs and speaking. 1957 the entire school system was integrated. It is an ideal integrated school system b/c all involved wanted it to be an integrated system. Committee selection included people who had studied the problem and wanted the issue to be carried out fairly. Both the black and white systems were substandard. There was an advantage to both to be integrated. No community is better than its weakest citizens. All citizens should be brought up to a certain level to become worthwhile citizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiotape</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>00:12:15</td>
<td>Careful planning has to go into an integration program. Once the plan was created they followed it closely, but kept flexibility to change. Preparedness of the teachers was key. High school students weren't concerned with the color of the teacher, but were concerned about their qualification. First we need to have the acceptance of all teachers of each other. All of the teachers have to be well-prepared. Teachers must continue to attend school and keep up. Often African American teachers are put in charge special classes so the impression is that something is wrong with the teacher. Mr. Thomas came in on an equal basis with the white teachers teaching at the same level as them. He was given a home room after three years which put him on an equal footing with other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiotape</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>00:15:27</td>
<td>No great problem with the children. Mr. Thomas considers all children the same regardless of race. They are interested in fairness and want to be proud of their teachers. Anecdote about a child getting a lower grade because his work had slipped, considered Mr. Thomas fair. African American students are slow to respond due to fear of not being accepted. Must put forth an effort to make them feel a part of the school. All activities continued as before integration, senior prom, senior class trips, etc. The guidance counselor can be of great service in helping the students regardless of race. Help the students find the course of study they are best suited to pursue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiotape</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>00:18:37</td>
<td>Mr. Thomas welcomes questions from the audience regarding the Caverna School System and his personal experiences. Personally he feels that true Christians with God's help can solve the problems. Spend time looking for where people are alike and less looking for differences. There must be give and take on both sides. Problems must be weighed carefully in order to make good decisions. Offers his assistance to the group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audiotape</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>00:21:11</td>
<td>Mr. Thomas asks the audience to ask themselves &quot;How would I feel if I were African American in this situation?&quot; or &quot;How would I feel if I were white in this situation?&quot; And think carefully without prejudice to find the solutions to the problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audiotape</td>
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<td>00:22:20</td>
<td><em>Mr. Clark thanks Mr. Thomas and makes some closing remarks about the program and meeting procedures.</em></td>
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