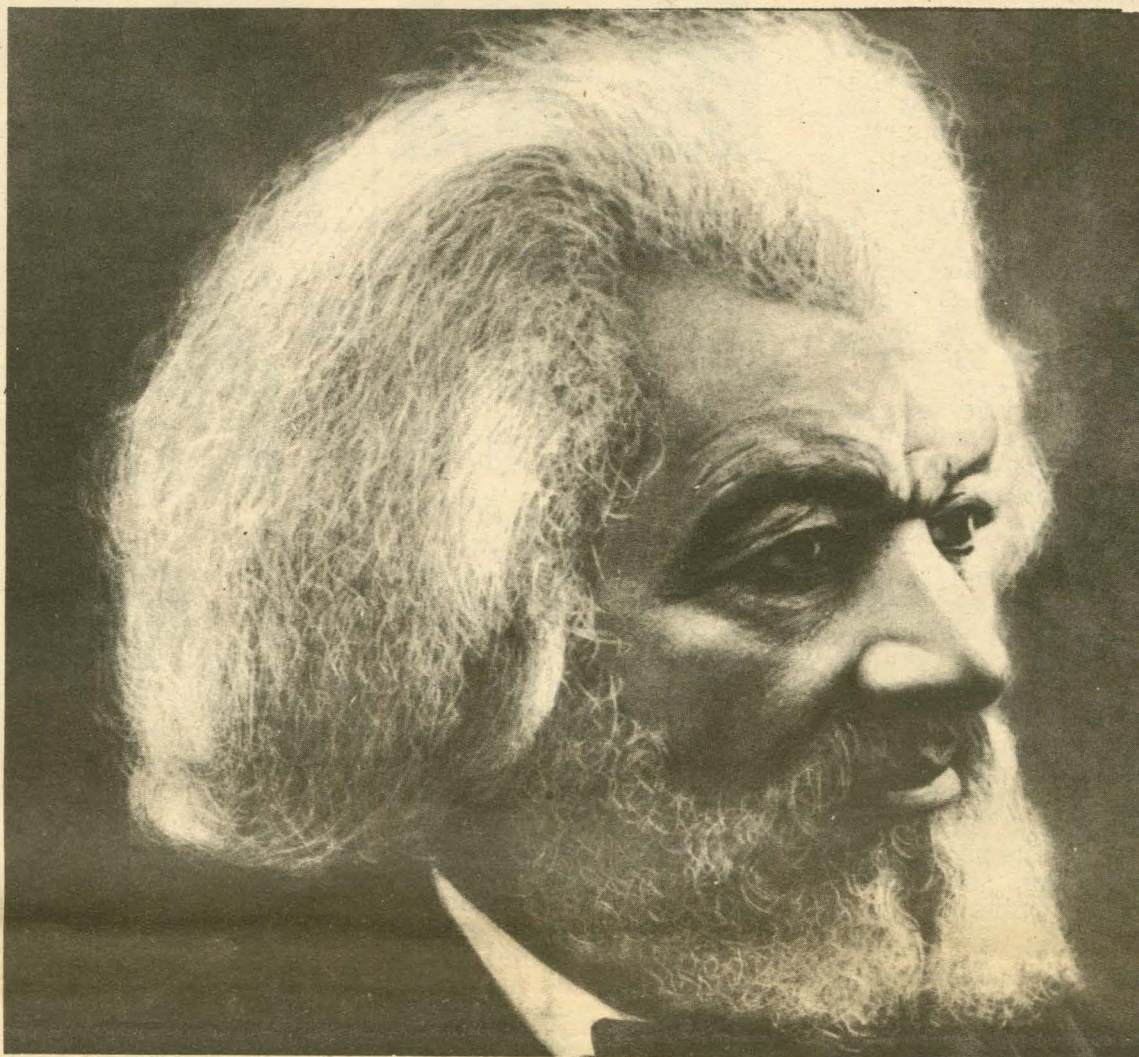


Frederick Douglass..

Father Of The Protest Movement

Frederick Douglass' famous Fourth of July speech is a good example of the passion and brilliance he brought to the antislavery cause. Speaking at Rochester, New York, on July 5, 1852, he indicted every structure of power in America. "What," he asked, "to the American slave is your Fourth of July? I answer; a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciation of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade and solemnity, are, to Him, more bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy--a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages..."

"you boast of your love of liberty," Douglass continued, "your superior civilization and your pure Christianity... You hurl anathemas at the crowned headed tyrants of Russia and Austria and pride yourselves on your Democratic institutions while you yourselves consent to the mere tools and bodyguards



of the tyrants of Virginia and Carolina.

You invite to your shores fugitives of oppression from abroad, honor them with banquets, greet them with ovations, cheer them, toast them, salute them, protect them, and pour out your money to them like water; but the fugitives from your own land you advertise, hunt, arrest, shoot and kill. You glory in your refinement and your universal education; yet you maintain a system as barbarous and dreadful as ever stained the character of a nation--a system begun in avarice, supported in pride, and perpetuated in cruelty. You shed tears over fallen Hungary, and make the sad story of her wrongs the theme of your poets states, and orators, till your gallant sons are ready to fly to arms to vindicate her cause against the oppressor; but, in regard to the ten thousand wrongs of the American slave, you would enforce the strictest silence, and would hail him as an enemy of the nation who dares to make those wrongs the subject of public discourse!"

Douglass dared to make "the ten thousand wrongs" the subject of public discourse. Week after week, year after year, in the crucial decades before the Civil War, he went up and down the North, warning, preaching, pleading. He and other black abolitionists played a major role in shaping the crisis which led to the Civil War.

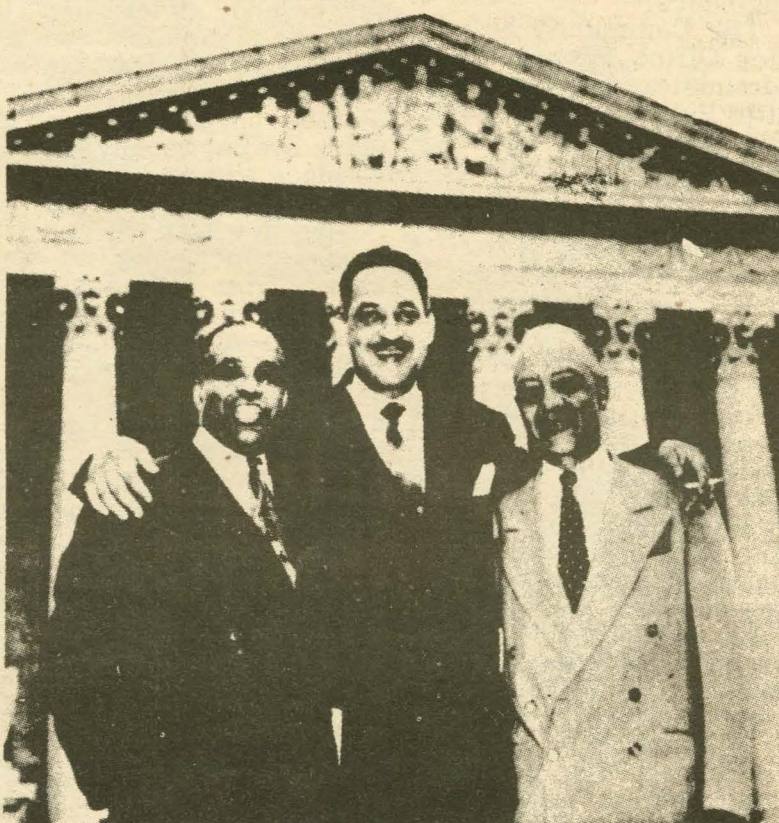
1954 Desegregation Decision

On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court of the United States unanimously outlawed racial segregation in the public schools, setting aside the "separate but equal" doctrine which the Court had upheld in 1896. "Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal... Liberty under law extends to the full range of conduct which an individual is free to pursue, and it cannot be restricted except for a proper governmental objective. Segregation in public education is not reasonably related to any proper governmental objective. Segregation in public education is not reasonably related to any proper governmental objective."

Chief Justice Earl Warren read two decisions, the first of which affected seventeen states in which there was legal segregation and the other the District of Columbia. Implementing these decisions a year later, the Court directed on May 31, 1955, that educational integration be achieved with "all deliberate speed," based on equitable principles and a "practical flexibility." And one year after that, on March 5, 1956, the Supreme Court ruled that its ban on segregation applied also to tax-supported colleges and universities.

A week after the 1954 decision, a group of ten Senators and twenty-seven Representatives from the Southern states issued a heated declaration opposing public school integration. They termed the Supreme Court decisions "unwarranted" and a "clear abuse of judicial power," as well as an encroachment "on rights reserved to the states." "We pledge ourselves," they announced, "to use all lawful means to bring about a reversal of this decision...and to prevent the use of force in its implementation." The following day the Supreme Court ordered the University of Florida to admit at once a Negro student who had been trying for seven years to enter its law school and whose case had three times come before the Court. During 1955-1956 more than 500 black students enrolled in formerly all-white colleges and universities in the South.

Washington, D.C., began at once to set a splendid example in prompt compliance with the Supreme Court's edict. In 1955 the complete integration of the District of Columbia public schools began. By 1956 Baltimore, the population of which was 41 percent Negro had in-



N.A.A.C.P. attorneys George E.C. Hayes (left), Thurgood Marshall (center) and James Nabrit, Jr.

tegrated 11,000 of its 51,000 black pupils, but in the rest of Maryland not more than eight counties had begun to mix the races.

In West Virginia only a few areas had not begun integration. The formerly all-colored West Virginia State College, with a Negro faculty, soon had more than 400 white students, forming more than a third of its student body. In Kentucky some black teachers were assigned to integrated classes. The University of Louisville became open to all races and Berea College, which had been forbidden by Kentucky state law in 1904 to continue its abolitionist policy of admitting blacks again accepted them. Oklahoma and Missouri officially began desegregation. Schools on federal military posts throughout the South were integrated.

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