



Hoxie 21 Reunion & Ceremony-2004



THE STATE OF ARKANSAS



Success Against the Grain (Excerpts from citation) Dated: June 19, 2003)

Citation **The Hoxie 21**

Whereas, the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 outlawed segregation in the public schools, and as a result the Hoxie school Board voted to allow 21 local black students to attend Hoxie School.

Whereas, making such a change would require courage and commitment on the part of many including school officials, and community leaders, and such traits also extended on a more personal level, to the black students and their families: The Barksdales, Braxtons, Browns, Hendersons, Hills, Kellys, Rileys, Ruffins, and Tompkins.

The first official ceremony of recognition for the historical events of the 1955 Hoxie Public School Integration was held September 4th and 5th, 2004, in Hoxie/Walnut Ridge Arkansas. The State of Arkansas, through proclamation, named the 21 black students, **"The Hoxie 21", June of 2004.**



Event to mark Hoxie School desegregation 2004 Reunion Committee

The steering committee for the Hoxie 21 Reunion is making final plans for the Sept. 4 and 5 events in Hoxie and Walnut Ridge. The committee has confirmed that U.S. Senator Blanche Lincoln and State Attorney General Mike Beebe are making plans to speak at the Saturday, Sept. 4, midday gathering on the courthouse lawn. John Bland - TD publisher



Senator Lincoln, Cong. Berry, speaks at Hoxie 21 reunion and celebration.



Dr. Charity Smith, deputy director of the Arkansas State Department of Education, speaks at the reunion and commemoration.



Guest, **Imogene Stansbury**

Sings, *God Bless America.*



Former **AR State Representative Don House**
Chairperson & student **Fayth Washington**
AR State Senator, Tracy Steel.
the keynote speaker

Mrs. Rosemary Hill
Hoxie 21 parent & activist



Deborah Barksdale Frazier,
Yvonne Barksdale Taylor &
Teacher- Mrs. Charlene Trotter



Yvonne & Son visit with
former classmate Melina Lacefield

Bernie Duke, Coach
Oral Roberts, Hoxie Coach-1956,
Sen. Tracy Steele, & Fayth Hill



Don House, Sen. Tracy Steele
& Ethel Tompkins. Hoxie 21



Paulette Jackson
& guest Tomeka Hill

Hoxie 21 Students



Current Superintendent
Dennis Truxler



Ethel Tompkins & Linda White

**Rhodes College - 2005 -
50th Anniversary for Hoxie
21 Celebrates with Barret
Lecture Series**

Anne Kelly, Margaret, Mae Kelly,
Fayth Hill Washington



Mrs. Charlene Trotter, Teacher '55



The "Hoxie 21" Reunion

By: Peggy Robinson Wright



BOARDS OF INTEGRATION
This photo shows the members of the board of school trustees in 1955. From left to right: Fred S. Anderson of E. Pitt, Texas, Ralston Ray of DeWitt, Mich., and Fred H. Washington of Memphis. The photo is very difficult to see, as the men are seated at a table and the photo is very dark.

Picture in article ran in Life Magazine



Dr. Charity Fleming Smith, Assistant State Director, Arkansas Department of Education Accountability Division

Photo by: Peggy R. Wright



L/R Deborah Barksdale Frazier (Hoxie 21 Student), Yvonne Barksdale Taylor (Hoxie 21 Student), and Mrs. Charlene Trotter

Photo by: Peggy R. Wright

49 Years later.....

On May 17, 1954, the United States Supreme Court announced its decision that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." The decision effectively denied the legal basis for segregation in Kansas and 20 other states with segregated classrooms and would forever change race relations in the United States.

In a small rural community 23 miles from Jonesboro, Arkansas and 122 miles from Little Rock, Arkansas, the Hoxie School Board on June 25, 1955 made a decision to integrate Hoxie Schools not only because it was the law, but because it was right." (Tom Walters, Memphis Commercial Appeal, June 26, 2003). This was two years prior to Little Rock's school integration crisis.

September 4-5 2004, The "Hoxie 21" Reunion 2004, a reunion with the theme, "Success Against the Grain" was held. This was the 1st ceremony held in remembrance of the integration of the Hoxie School District. Originally there were 25 students who enrolled, two immediately withdrew and two more did not continue for various reasons. Through it all 21 remained, and 17 came back for the reunion that was planned by a steering committee composed of: Fayth Hill-Washington, Chairperson (1955 Hoxie Student), Junior Briner, Treasurer, Rosemary Hill (1955 Hoxie Parent and Advisory), Marlyn Tate, Current Hoxie School Board Member, Don House, Arkansas State House of Representatives, Dennis Truxler, Superintendent of Hoxie School District 46, Ethel Tompkins, Communications (1955 Hoxie Student) and Linda White, Secretary.

The purpose of the Hoxie reunion was to come together, celebrate and record into historical record, the

success of the 1955 integration of the Hoxie Schools and to recognize the students, board members, teachers and families that demonstrated positive leadership roles.

The reunion kick off began on Saturday, September 4, 2004 on the Courthouse Square in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas with the national anthem sung by Mr. Justin Griffin, Junior Vocal Performance Major from Sikeston, Missouri and a musical selection by the Hoxie High School Band. A large group of individuals, all ages, and backgrounds attended the event. Also in attendance and on the program were: Senator Blanche Lincoln, U.S. Senate, Attorney General Mike Beebe, Representatives Hank Wilkins IV, John Eason, Lindbergh Thomas, John Lewellen, Don House, and Senator Tim Wooldridge. Many were disappointed because the Former President Bill Clinton was scheduled to attend but was unable to do so because of recent health problems. But everyone knew he was there in spirit.

The 17 members of the Hoxie 21 were introduced and applauded by those present. It was a very electrifying moment to see them come forward after so many years.

A wonderful picnic lunch was prepared and served on the lawn and everyone enjoyed reminiscing and sharing their stories.

The festivities continued on Saturday night with a banquet at the Hoxie School District 46 cafeteria. Congressman Marion Berry was one of the speakers and he said in his remarks that "as a state and as a community we must remember that it is important that we not forget as sometimes we think that the battle is over but it's not. In our spirit and our heart there must be a determination that it will be better for others than it was for us."