



# Our Journey: Stories of School Desegregation and Community in Champaign-Urbana

A radio documentary produced by Franklin Middle School girls with guidance from WILL-AM

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### Nathaniel Banks

Nathaniel Banks is director of the Afro-American Cultural Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Mr. Banks is former principal of Judea Christian School and a current member of the Champaign School Board. His family has lived in the area for generations.

[listen to the Nathaniel Banks interview](#)

[read the interview transcript](#)

Interviewed by Deanna Carr

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### Erma Bridgewater

Erma Bridgewater integrated her neighborhood elementary school, Lincoln School, in 1919. She was director of the Douglass Community Center for 24 years and has a master's degree in sociology. She was born and raised in Champaign-Urbana, IL.

[listen to the Erma Bridgewater interview](#)

[read the interview transcript](#)

Interviewed by Tamika Lee

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### Catherine Hogue

Catherine Hogue is a former supervisor and chief union steward at AT&T in Champaign.

[listen to the Catherine Hogue interview](#)

[read the interview transcript](#)

Interviewed by Tamika Lee

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### John Lee Johnson



John Lee Johnson was born in Champaign in 1941. He is a community advocate and has brought several successful lawsuits against the Urbana and Champaign school districts on behalf of African American children.

[listen to the John Lee Johnson interview](#)

[read the interview transcript](#)

Interviewed by Markesha Motton

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### Martel Miller

Martel Miller was born in Champaign in 1960 and was one of the first group of Black school children to be bused from the north end to the south end of town to desegregate the schools. He is an educational consultant.

[listen to the Martel Miller interview](#)

[read the interview transcript](#)

Interviewed by Markesha Motton

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### Ivon Ridgeway



Ivon Ridgeway is a radio announcer and cab driver. He was among the first group of Black school children to be bused from the north end to the south end of town to desegregate the schools.

[listen to the Ivon Ridgeway interview](#)

[read the interview transcript](#)

Interviewed by Markesha Motton

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### Kathleen Slates

Kathleen Slates was born in Urbana in 1940. She has worked in a variety of office work. In high school, she picketed local department stores in the late 1950s over their hiring practices.

[listen to the entire interview](#)



 [read the interview transcript](#)

Interviewed by Tiera Carr

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### Hester Suggs

Hester Nelson Suggs was principal of Booker T. Washington Elementary School in Champaign for 22 years. Before that, she taught at Dr. Howard School and was the first Black teacher at Leal School. She has a master's degree in teaching administration. She was born and raised in Champaign-Urbana, IL.

 [listen to the entire Hester Suggs interview](#)

 [read the interview transcript](#)

Interviewed by Veronica Martin

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### Fannie Taylor & Nina Patterson

Dr. Nina Patterson is the daughter of Fannie Taylor (pictured left). Nina was among the first group of African American students to be bused from her neighborhood in the north to schools in south Champaign. Dr. Patterson earned her Ph. D. from San Francisco State University. Her mother, Ms. Fannie Taylor, raised Dr. Patterson, and her brother, Dr. William Patterson, as a single mother. Ms. Taylor moved from the south to Champaign in the 1950s and attended schools here.

 [listen to the entire interview](#)

 [read the interview transcript](#)

Interviewed by Jessica Austin

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### Arnold Yarber

Arnold Yarber is owner of Po' Boys Barbeque. He went to chiropractic school in the 1940s but was not allowed to get his license because Illinois denied licenses to African-Americans at that time.



 [listen to the entire Arnold Yarber interview](#)

 [read the interview transcript](#)

Interviewed by Veronica Martin

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