

# “THE LITTLE ROCK NINE”



This picture shows seven of the “Little Rock Nine”, a group of nine afroamerican students who attempted the Little Rock Central High School in the city of Little Rock, Arkansas (USA).

On May 17, 1954 every law about the segregation of public school was declared unconstitutional, basing on the historic “Brows v. Board of Education” and after that the American High Schools started their desegregation’s process admitting some of the black students who fought for an education. Thanks to the Supreme Court decision “The Little Rock Nine” were accepted in this school and it was an event remembered as one of the most important steps against segregation.

In the city of Little Rock there were social disruptions, political machinations and racial conflicts. During 1958 the governor, Faubus, decided to close all the school of the city, locking out almost 3500 black and white students from a public education, but also 200 teachers and administrators to empty class. There was also a Referendum in which Faubus convinced the people of Little Rock to vote what he wanted and the new state laws contained racial segregation in schools. This period is called “The Lost Year” (1958-1959) because of the consequences that it brought in

the Little Rock society, the civil right movements that it caused and consequently the big quantity of crimes committed by the black community. At the end of this year the students could come back to their school but it wasn't so easy for the black ones, who were often subjects of physical abuse; the only positive aspect of this period is the little support given by the white people to the afroamericans after the referendum because it shows that sometimes citizens help each other, despite racism.

It is important, for the American history, to remember what happened and how much these students were courageous. They had a strong perseverance and the education that they received, after fighting for their rights, brought everyone of them to a degree, to an important role in the society. They are all celebrated as symbols.

Of course, every day at school the situation for them wasn't pleasant; they were always harassed and threatened by the other students and it was difficult the relations with other people also for the ones, like some teachers, who supported the Little Rock Nine.

Here we could read the "Nine Names" of the students and the degree that they got:

- **Melba Pattilo Beals**, journalism, She wrote a book named "Warriors don't cry", based on her experience of life.
- **Elizabeth Ann Eckford**, history
- **Ernest Gideon Kolmark**, sociology. He was the first African American graduated.
- **Gloria Ray Kolmark**, chemistry and mathematics
- **Carlotta Walls LaNier**, science. She was inspired by Rosa Parks and became the president of the Little Rock Nine Foundation, a scholarship, founded because she followed her ideals and wanted an equal access to education for African Americans.
- **Terrence James Roberts**, sociology
- **Jefferson Allison Thomas**, business administration
- **Minnijean Brown Trickey**, Native Human Services. She won an award for her community work for social justice; she gave a big contribute to racial harmony.

This is just one little example of racism in the world but what does really count is the capacity of people to fight for their ideals, despite of the horrible situations. The

most important thing is to learn how to behave looking back to events like this because nowadays sadly we could still find racism and discrimination.

Sitography:

<https://www.nps.gov/chsc/index.htm>

<https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/central-high-school-integration>

<https://ualr.edu/race-ethnicity/the-little-rock-nine-since-1957/>

[https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little\\_Rock\\_Nine](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Rock_Nine)