

(All Actors take on various Voices of Narration for this segment, which must be done with a quick pace and almost as if one voice. Everyone except actor playing Marshall, who must remain in character, wear costumes of common citizens.)

ENSEMBLE MEMBER

By the time the Brown case appeal was ready to be heard by the Supreme Court, cases from three other states had been added to it. The Topeka Board of Education had decided not to get involved any further. But the districts from other states who were having to defend their segregated schools were urging Kansas not to drop out or it would hurt all the cases.

ANOTHER

But something was happening in Topeka. The general feeling among the citizens was becoming that segregation did not make very much sense in a state that had called itself "The Free State" when it was founded. So the Board of Education told the Kansas Attorney General's Office that they did not want to defend their position before the Supreme Court. Finally, the Supreme Court virtually ordered the Attorney General's office to participate.

MARSHALL

I was there for this one. Wouldn't have missed it. I'd spent years working toward this very moment in history.

It seemed to go on forever. Thousands upon thousands of pages of trial testimony.

ENSEMBLE MEMBER

Then, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court died. I was not among those who was happy about it, even though he was clearly on the side of those who favored continued segregation of schools. But the time needed for President Eisenhower to name another Chief Justice only added to the drawn-out process.

ENSEMBLE MEMBER

He chose Earl Warren.

ANOTHER

And history was altered forever.

MASTHEAD: MAY 17, 1954. WASHINGTON D.C.

ENSEMBLE MEMBER

May 17, 1954. More than 3 years since Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka had first been filed. No one suspected that it would turn out to be such an important day. Chief Justice Warren's opinion consisted of just two paragraphs.