

# Virginia OKs scholarships in integration case

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) - Virginia lawmakers approved \$1 million Wednesday to fund scholarships for now middle-aged people who were denied an education when public schools shut down in the late 1950s to avoid racial integration.

Nearly 100 former students from Prince Edward County, where public schools closed for five years, stood in the gallery and burst into applause after the House approved the funding, 94-4. The Senate later approved the measure 36-0.

"I feel like crying. I'm so emotional, so happy," said 57-year-old Rita Moseley, who was sent 150 miles across the state to continue her education when schools in the county closed.

Gov. Mark R. Warner's office estimates that 250 to 350 former students, now middle-aged, could receive several thousand dollars each under the statewide scholarship program.

The money could be used toward a high school diploma, a GED certificate, career or technical training, or an undergraduate degree from a Virginia college.

Legislators had initially

provided \$50,000 for the Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Fund, but Warner amended the budget to increase the funding to \$1 million.

Billionaire philanthropist John Kluge last month pledged \$1 million of his own money if the state would match it.

A student protest in 1951 over conditions at Prince Edward County's segregated Black high school led to a

lawsuit that became one of five comprising the Brown v. Board of Education case, which ended school segregation nationwide in 1954.

Several public school systems in Virginia shut their doors rather than integrate. Prince Edward's schools closed longer than any other, from 1959 to 1964. Public money was used to start a private all-White academy in the county, while Blacks and some poor Whites either left

home to continue their education or did not attend school at all.

Some Republicans argued Wednesday that approving state funds for the program could open the door to paying reparations to Blacks who suffered abuses under slavery.

"It is not possible for one generation to compensate for the past. No one would know where to begin to trace the consequences of the imper-

fections, tragedies and injustices of former times," said Delegate Robert L. Ware.

But Delegate Robert G. Marshall, also a Republican, said there are differences between compensation and reparations.

"Individuals who are alive today were directly affected by an act of the people of Virginia," he said. "I think this is fair to the extent we can make things fair 50 years after the fact."

John Hurt, a 54-year-old truck driver and factory worker, said he would use scholarship money to learn how to read and write better. Hurt was in the first grade when the Prince Edward schools closed and did not learn to read until he was an adult.

"You can't bring back what you took," he said, "but you can establish some kind of restitution for what we had to go through."



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## Housing—

(Continued from Page 4)

Jackson added that the administration still hopes to get legislation passed that would give local housing authorities more flexibility to decide how to spend their money.

Under the Bush administration and through new home ownership and down payment initiatives, Jackson said "owning a home is an affordable option for more families than ever before." Efforts to increase minority home ownership in the last three years have led to 1.5 million new minority homeowners, he said.

But a gap remains between ownership among Whites and minorities. The homeownership rate for Whites is more than 75 percent, and at about 50 percent for Blacks and Hispanics.

Frank said the administration has a poor record on housing.

"There is nowhere in the federal government where this administration has been more aggressively opposed to programs to help alleviate economic unfairness and gross inequality than in the housing area," he said.

Frank said Democrats in Congress will try to block administration efforts to turn the Section 8 program into a grant to the states.