

**Plessy v. Ferguson  
(1896)**

Justice John Marshall Harlan's Dissent

"Our constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. . .

"The destinies of the two races, in this country, are indissolubly linked together, and the interests of both require that the common government of all shall not permit the seeds of race hate to be planted under the sanction of law. What can more certainly arouse race hate, what more certainly create and perpetuate a feeling of distrust between these races, than state enactments which, in fact, proceed on the ground that colored citizens are so inferior and degraded that they cannot be allowed to sit in public coaches occupied by white citizens? That, as all will admit, is the real meaning of such legislation as was enacted in Louisiana."

**Brown v. Board of Education  
(1954)**

Chief Justice Warren for the court

"Today, education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments. . . . Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms. . .

"To separate [children in grade and high schools] from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone. . . .

"We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place. Separate education facilities are inherently unequal"