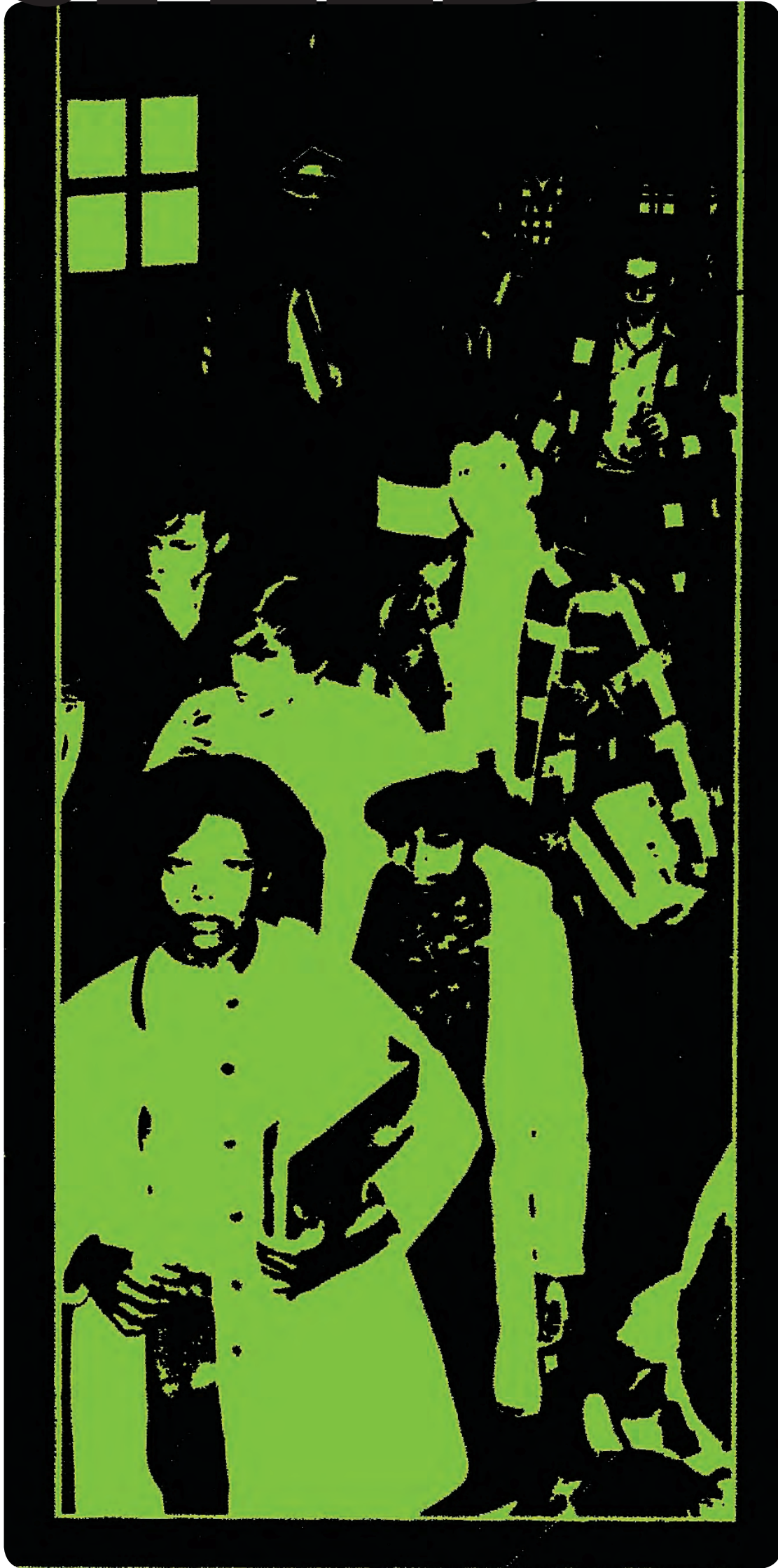


# 'WITH ALL DELIBERATE SPEED'



Longview Independent School District fully integrated more than 15 years after the Supreme Court's ruling that declared segregation within schools unconstitutional.

Almost 40 years later, the district is in the midst of formulating a new strategy for assigning students to schools.

Inside this section are stories from some of the people – teachers and students – who lived through the district's full 1971 integration.

BY ERIN WATERS  
Contributing writer

**E**ARLY THIS SUMMER, Longview ISD officials began a process to change the district's attendance policies in conjunction with the anticipated completion of a districtwide building and renovation project. But a proposal to return to "neighborhood schools" has sparked concerns among some community members who believe it will re-segregate the district.

The attendance zone proposal expands upon the \$266.9 million bond project to demolish, replace or renovate 14 outdated school buildings starting at the elementary level, a four-year project approved in May 2008.

LISD attendance data shows a tangled web of 28 zones that scatter children around the district through an equally complex busing system — both products of a 1969 court order to desegregate Longview with a racial balance of 70-30, white to black, on all campuses.

The district aims to eliminate long bus rides to and from school for many students, officials say, and redraw the attendance zones geographically around the new elementary schools — cutting the number of zones from 28 to six. Neighborhood schools would reduce the need for busing but result in less ethnically diverse student populations in most schools, particularly those at the southern and northern ends of town.

Passage of the proposal requires ending the federal desegregation court order that

has the zones locked in place. Administrators say the white-black ratio is impossible to meet today because of changes in the city's housing patterns and the ethnic make-up of the district.

LISD Superintendent James Wilcox, two-and-a-half years with the district, envisions brand new, state-of-the-art schools close to home, increased parental involvement and academic success for students.

He anticipates a bright future for LISD as "the best school district in the state of Texas," believing the best facilities will begin to produce the best students. In 2008, LISD had one school ranked exemplary by the state.

A history of racial divide in Longview could overshadow Wilcox' optimistic vision. Some community members fear the end of the desegregation mandate will be a 40-year step backwards to a re-segregated district with unequal opportunities.

Wilcox assigned a rezoning committee to tackle the proposed attendance zones, which

See ZONES, Page 2G

## Black and white becomes green

The image at left showing black and white students was on the front of the 1971 Lobo Yearbook, the first year of official integration at Longview High School.

"There is no black, there is no white," Former Lobo football coach Clint Humphries told his team after integration. "There is only green and white."

### INSIDE THE SECTION



#### LIFE NEAR THE BUS STOP AND IN THE CLASSROOM

Disturbances outside Longview High School and in its hallways and classrooms were common during the early years of forced integration. Read how former students and teachers viewed those years.

PAGES 2G, 5G



#### BOMBINGS SHAKE A COMMUNITY

On July 4, 1970, a different type of fireworks rattled Longview. A group of men, wanting to stifle Longview ISD integration, set off explosions at the district's bus barn.

PAGE 3G



#### UNITY NOT EASY TO FIND ON FOOTBALL FIELD

Coach Clifford Stewart had tasted success at all-black Mary C. Womack High School since he arrived at the school in 1951. But as forced integration arrived, Stewart, his staff and Womack players faced stiff challenges becoming the newest Lobos.

PAGE 4G

*"At the time I was unhappy, but there's an old song, 'You will understand it better, by and by.' We all found out that we were the same."*

**Kathy Williams**

Former Mary C. Womack High School and Longview High student, talking about integration



## 'WITH ALL DELIBERATE SPEED'

THE INTEGRATION OF LONGVIEW SCHOOLS

# Spring of 1971 tested many black students

BY JON PRIOR  
Contributing writer

SCHOOL BUSES GRUMBLED in front of Longview High School in the spring of 1971. The noise of protests between black and white students drowned out the diesel engines at the bus stop on Magrill Street.

Kathy Williams, then a 10th-grader, remembers water bombs landing on black students on one side of the street and eggs whizzing by, cracking against the white faces of students on the other.

Only months before, she was getting off the bus on Gum Street, five minutes across town from Longview High School. She had gone to Mary C. Womack High School, the all-black high school with second-hand textbooks.

When she entered her junior year at Womack, the rumors raced through the hallways about integration. Williams didn't want it.

"I wanted to graduate from the same school that my mother graduated from," she said. "And that was my plan. I had no intention of going to Longview High, but I didn't have a choice. It was what happened to me."

Nearly 40 years have passed since those days at the bus stop. Williams is the administrator and owner of Divine Care home nursing service in Longview.

"I felt like I was being thrown into it," she says. "It was like cold water. I was where I wanted to be. I was in the 10th grade. I had already made friends, and I was in the groups I wanted to be in."

While at Womack, she spent Friday nights at the worn stadium across the street from the school. She was in the Pep Club. She was in the choir and the honor society.

When she arrived at Longview High, she and one other honor society member from Womack were allowed to join.

"I just had nothing in common with the people who were in the honor society," Williams said.

Once a week, the society held meetings at one of the members' homes. One night, they met at the house of a white student, where maids delivered hot dogs and soda.

Williams' parents were not a part of her life. She, her two sisters and two brothers grew up holding the heavy and loving hand of their grandmother, Ella, in a house on Harlem Street.

They had little money and no maids. They cooked their own meals and cleaned their own clothes.

"I remember sitting in that boy's house going, 'Whoa ...' Everything was new. I certainly wasn't used to a maid serving me," she said, laughing.

A short time after that meeting, she left the honor society. She just didn't want to hold a meeting in her home on Harlem Street.

The pain of that time, of losing her junior year at Womack to the routine of the bus stop, is carried along the peaks and valleys of her story.

"It was very testy," Williams said.

"Number one, they didn't want us there, and we didn't want to be there. Now I understand why it was done. It was necessary. Someone had to be the group to go through the growing pains."

Those who followed understand that sacrifice.

Dr. S.E. Willis, a podiatrist in practice with his father, I.E. Willis — who was one of the leaders of integration in Longview — said it is because of that first class that rode the bus to Longview High School that the racial clashes and those inevitable wounds began to heal.

"I was grateful for them," he said. "That's asking a lot, to sacrifice your high school years."

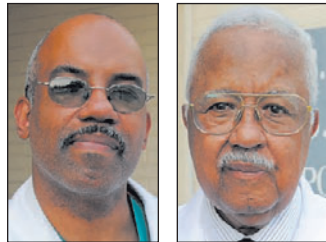
S.E. Willis experienced it as a kindergartner. Before 1971, his father enrolled him in white schools.

"With me being naive and young, I guess I just didn't notice it. Some of my colleagues, we'll get into a racial equality discussion. One said that prejudice is something



Kevin Green/News-Journal Photo

Kathy Williams say she didn't want to leave Mary C. Womack High School and integrate into Longview High. "I wanted to graduate from the same school that my mother graduated from," she says.



Dr. S.E. Willis

Dr. I.E. Willis

that's taught to young kids. I do believe that to a degree. In my household, I was always taught to respect everybody," he said.

With her skin toughened from her grandmother's raising, Williams marched through her remaining days of high school.

She wanted to go to college, but the white guidance counselor offered no assistance when she inquired about scholarships and loans.

Williams' grandmother was there when she graduated. Though Williams' senior year was there when she graduated. Though Williams' senior year was there when she graduated. Though Williams' senior year was there when she graduated.

she hit the road, touring with the Majestics, a seven-piece band that wound wild trails along the South.

She sang and shared a microphone with her future husband.

She graduated Longview School of Vocational Nursing in 1973, while pinching pennies and living with her grandmother.

She worked at Good Shepherd Hospital in Longview, while earning her nursing degree from Kilgore College. In 1983, she earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Tyler.

Her daughter, Kasha Williams, works with her at the nursing service, wearing a similar grin. Kasha didn't have to live through the spring semester of 1971, her mother's proudest accomplishment.

"I don't regret it," she says. "At the time I was unhappy, but there's an old song, 'You will understand it better, by and by.' We all found out that we were the same."

## Zones

From Page 1G  
met for the first time in early June. A discussion about maps, charts and statistics transformed into a sounding board for heated opinions for and against the proposal.

### History lesson

The Supreme Court's Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka decision in 1954 that declared segregated education "inherently unequal" and unconstitutional transformed the nation more rapidly in some communities than others.

The "affirmative duty" of school boards to establish nonracial attendance policies was delayed or ignored in many districts, often requiring judicial intervention to kick-start genuine efforts. Longview desegregated in response to a court order 15 years after the court decision.

While some schools in Texas had fully integrated by 1961, LISD retained separate white and black schools. The Longview board of trustees was taken to federal court in November 1962, according to district documents, and received judicial supervision thereafter, requiring several reappearances in court throughout the decade.

The U.S. District Court of East Texas ordered Longview to begin integrating on a grade-per-year basis, which LISD met with a "freedom of choice" attendance policy starting in 1963. The Supreme Court later described freedom of choice plans as "insufficient as a sole means of eliminating segregation," saying some district were using them to skirt compliance.

In 1968, a federal court ordered Longview schools to assign more black teachers to white schools and vice versa, prompting a "teacher swap" that served to preview broader upcoming changes in classroom diversity.

The Supreme Court hastened the desegregation process in 1969 when it allowed district judges to establish approximate racial ratios in schools and ordered immediate termination of all remaining dual school systems in United States v. Montgomery County and Alexander v. Holmes, respectively.

In August 1969, the LISD school board received a court order to fully desegregate and submitted a plan to the court Jan. 6, 1970. Federal District Judge Joe Fisher approved its five-year implementation, but the Justice Department appealed and the plan was overturned. That required an immediate end to LISD's dual school system in compliance with the case law established in Alexander v. Holmes.

On April 1, 1970, the school board voted to submit a neighborhood schools proposal, which Fisher approved. The Justice Department again appealed on July 3, saying it illegally allowed four all-black schools.

The district's neighborhood school plan was reversed and remanded Aug. 21, 1970. The school board received three choices for immediate desegregation: pairing, zoning without any all-black schools or the original Jan. 6, 1970 plan. The January plan, or Plan J, was re-approved Aug. 27, 1970.

LISD officials redrew the attendance zones and replaced freedom of choice with busing to establish a 30 percent black and 70 percent white racial balance on each campus. Former all-black schools Mary C. Womack High School and Ned E. Williams, Rollins and Southside elementary schools were closed in 1970.

### Divided

Today, the desegregation order is an unnecessary hassle, district officials say, calling the black-white ratio an "impossible goal."

"We've done everything the Justice Department has

asked us to do," Wilcox said at the first rezoning committee meeting. "But Longview ISD has never met the requirements of the court order. Not for one day."

He wants to end cross-district busing with neighborhood schools.

"Some of our kids are getting up at 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning to get to school and not getting home until after dark," said LaRose Benton, a parent serving as a co-chair of the committee.

The district's attendance zones and busing system look much as they did four decades ago, except for changes made in May 2005 when LISD acquired funding to designate five new magnet schools, according to district officials.

The magnet schools concept is recognized as a method used to reverse the effects of "white flight," a shift of white populations out of school districts because of desegregation.

LISD officials point to a decrease in the white population and an influx of Hispanic students as factors that make a 70-30 student ratio unattainable. The Justice Department's desegregation order does not account for Hispanic students, who now account for almost 30 percent of the student population, according to district documents.

But does failure to meet the Justice Department's "impossible" ratio mean neighborhood schools are OK? Community members have varying views.

Sidney Bell Willis, a retired Longview educator and Longview city councilwoman who serves on the committee, challenged what she called "good rhetoric" behind what neighborhood schools seeks to solve.

"I taught for 45 years, and I went through segregation," Willis said.

"I did not approve (of desegregation) because I felt that our kids were getting a good education as they were. We didn't have the drop-outs that we have today. We were proud. Of course we had to follow that order. But to follow that order you don't have to bus them that far."

"Our feeling," Wilcox said, "is that students in their neighborhood can get a quality education."

When the Rev. D.J. Nelson of Friendship Baptist Church proposed that neighborhood schools looked like re-segregation, Wilcox was quick to respond.

"We will not have segregated schools," he said.

"I resent you saying that," Wilcox added.

Other options include basing attendance policies on socioeconomic factors rather than race.

Leverage for school boards dissatisfied with affirmative action requirements came in 1991 when the Supreme Court authorized federal courts to end desegregation policies in Board of Education of Oklahoma City v. Dowell. In 2001, the Supreme Court established a three-part standard for determining whether a school district has achieved unitary status:

1. "Whether the school district has fully and satisfactorily complied with the court's desegregation orders for a reasonable period of time;"

2. "Whether the school district has eliminated the vestiges of past de jure discrimination to the extent practicable;"

3. "Whether the school district has demonstrated a good faith commitment to the whole of the court's order and to those provisions of the law and the Constitution that were the predicate for judicial intervention in the first place."

LISD's neighborhood schools proposal would have to get approval from the school board and the Department of Justice to take effect.

## About the stories in this section

In June, eight journalism graduate students from the University of North Texas spent two weeks here talking to residents about integration and other issues related to race. The students returned a number of times to do more reporting.

This project stemmed from a friendship I have with George Getschow, writer-in-residence at the North Texas Mayborn Graduate College of Journalism, and with its interim dean, Mitch Land.

The department had embarked on an ambitious project for the Denton Record-Chronicle. I thought it would be fruitful and interesting to bring in these students to look at our community — and our past — with a fresh set of eyes.

They worked for free, while the paper covered their living expenses and a modest meal stipend.

I hope their stories provide insight into those events of 40-odd years ago. I also believe such projects are great ways to extend the resources of small newspapers such as ours, while providing students a venue to publish.

**Gary Borders**  
News-Journal publisher



Les Hassell/News-Journal Photo

University of North Texas students who worked on the Longview integration project, are, front row, from left, Valerie Gordon, Elise Brooking and Rebecca Hoeffner. Back row, from left, are Erin Waters, Dianna Wray, Sarah Perry, Melissa Crowe and Jon Prior.

### FIND MORE ON LONGVIEW ISD INTEGRATION AT NEWS-JOURNAL.COM

**CLICK IT UP:** Go online to view videos of community leaders — the Rev. Homer Rockmore, the first black Longview school board member, C.W. Bailey, former football coach Clint Humphries and former coach/assistant athletics director George Shankle — talking about their Longview ISD integration experiences.

## 'WITH ALL DELIBERATE SPEED'

THE INTEGRATION OF LONGVIEW SCHOOLS



*"What if these idiots had put a stick of dynamite on the bus during the school year? People started thinking about, well, this is crazy. These children, no matter what the color, deserve an education. We can't have people who are going to harm our children."*

Ronnie Morrison

Former newspaper reporter, talking about the men convicted in the Longview bus bombings

# Tension lit fuse to bombings

*A group wanting to delay integration in the city attacks school buses, putting Longview in the national spotlight*

BY DIANNA WRAY  
Contributing writer

ON JULY 4, 1970, shadowy figures approached the Longview ISD bus barn at 1110 East Young St. Crouching along the rear of the lot, a bolt cutter sliced a crescent shaped hole, 13 inches by 17 inches — just big enough for a man to wriggle through — at the base of the 8-foot metal fence.

The day had been full of flag waving, barbecue and fireworks, but Longview was beginning to quiet down. Racial tension that had been almost palpable in the previous months, spurred by court-ordered school desegregation, seemed to have abated. Residents couldn't have known their town was about to become notorious.

The shadows moved across the darkened parking lot, placing 28 charges of explosives on the asphalt pavement under and alongside the buses.

The figures worked with quiet efficiency. They lit the fuse with matches and wriggled back under the fence.

WHAM! Seventy pounds of dynamite ignited. The sound tore through the warm July air and a bright flash lit the sky, as if craters had gone off at once. But fireworks would fly up, fan out and paint the sky with sparkling colors. This was something else.

Longview police officer Ross Rosborough was in his patrol car at a stop sign 500 feet away when the explosion happened.

"It was a percussion-like feeling that kind of pushed me back in the seat of my car, pushed the car, too," he said.

Rosborough radioed for backup as he pulled into the parking lot of the athletic field house, which sat on a bluff about five feet above the lot. Three dozen buses sat below. Through the smoke, the glare of his searchlight revealed blackened, twisted masses of metal. The perpetrators were long gone.

Detective Clifford Phelps was also on duty and he called Texas Ranger Glenn Elliott for assistance. Elliott arrived just after midnight sporting the boots, cowboy hat, confidence and expertise of a longtime lawman. They began collecting evidence and recording the scene. The true picture of the devastation wasn't clear until the sun came up, revealing 33 of the 36 buses in the parking lot with gaping wounds, twisted metal revealing their underpinnings.

Elliott, white-haired but with eagle eyes undimmed by age, remembers, "I got called right after midnight . . . What they did was they blew up the bunch of school buses, and it was all about integration. It was some white people who didn't agree with black kids going to school with their kids. They belonged to a club. They weren't the KKK. They called themselves something else."

### Beginning integration

The Supreme Court ruled in 1954 that "separate but equal" schools were unconstitutional. Fifteen years later, school districts across the South had failed to comply. To them, the order to desegregate "with all deliberate speed" meant as slowly as possible.

On June 28, 1963, U.S. District Judge Joseph Sheehy ordered the schools to desegregate year by year and to offer freedom of choice. LISD continued to drag its feet.

On Dec. 1, 1969, the district was ordered to have a plan for integration presented and approved by Jan. 6, 1970. Faculty and staff were to be integrated by February.

In spring of 1970, students

at Longview and Mary C. Womack high schools were greeted by different-colored faces at the front of the classroom — white teachers went to Womack and black teachers to Longview High.

The experiment was deemed a success, and the school board cemented its plan to integrate the two high schools entirely, by shutting down Womack and combining the two student bodies at the beginning of the fall term. The announcement was worded to sound permanent — and unavoidable. Full details of the plans were printed in the Longview Daily News and the Longview Morning Journal.

The final, separate years of the two high schools ended on this note.

By Independence Day, things were in place. Integration was inevitable. The town was tense but trying to adjust.

### Secret group

Meanwhile, one group was making its opinions felt within the community. In the south corner of town, men gathered, uniting themselves against the race war they felt certain was coming. Fred Hayes seemed to be the leader. He canvassed the town for donations, receiving money, weapons, and on one occasion, a box of explosives.

Hayes, who ran a business selling sandwiches, held the meetings in his store, and members swore in blood not to tell about the organization. They put together a survival kit containing toothpaste, a brush, a small radio, flashlights, a length of rope, various small arms and room for socks and clothing. A picture of the pack also showed a machete, a hunting knife, rifles and shotguns. Thus equipped, the members planned to wage guerrilla warfare when the anticipated revolution came.

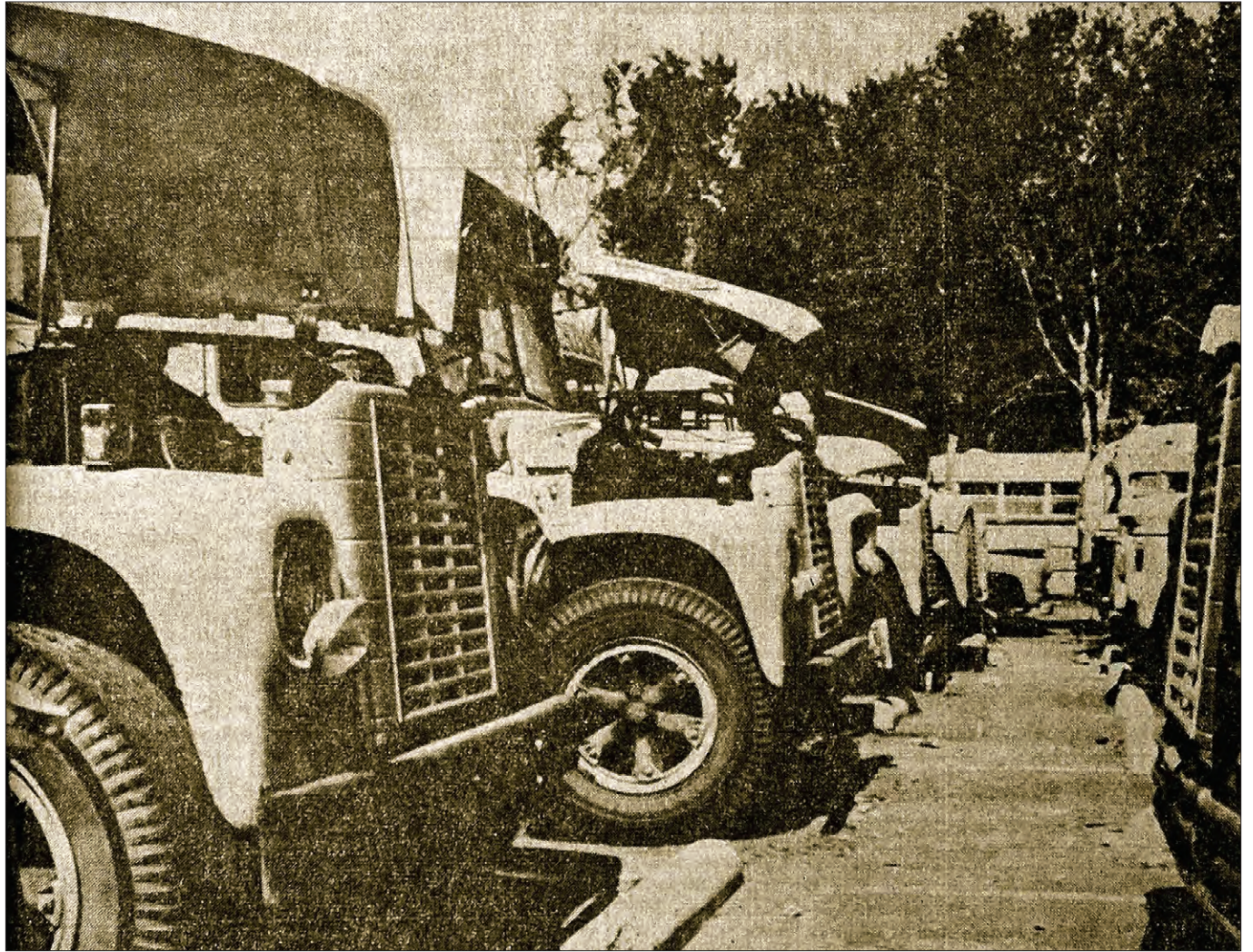
Hayes commissioned member Harvey Lee Shipman to print a pamphlet called "American Right."

It read: "Scholars have presented impressive evidence of white and Negro children as unequal and that forced unnatural mixing in schools, far from helping Negroes, can have a most damaging effect upon both Negroes and whites. Yet the federal bureaucracy, cruelly indifferent to the basic welfare of the people, but greatly for the political support of organized Negro groups is forcing upon school children the most harmful kind of integration."

The group began working with explosives, gleaning information from a Playboy magazine article on the use of nitroglycerin. The group also utilized Shipman's extensive knowledge of arms and explosives, acquired during World War II service in the Pacific. They tried to make crude mortar shells and worked on their technique with dynamite, using supplies acquired in Shreveport.

### Community reaction

In June 1970, a house purchased by a black woman in a white neighborhood was bombed by a device created with explosives and a flashlight. Witnesses described a car similar to one owned by Hayes and its occupants as



News-Journal Archives Photo

A photo in the July 5, 1970, edition of the Longview Morning Journal shows damage to school buses at the Longview ISD bus barn on East Young Street.



Texas Ranger Glenn Elliott, now retired, was brought in by the Longview Police Department to help investigate the 1970 bus bombings. "It was all about integration," he says.

Les Hassell  
News-Journal Photo

resembling Hayes and Kenneth Ray McMaster, a businessman. They became suspects in the crime, and law enforcement began monitoring them and their associates. As the country prepared to celebrate the 194th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the members of Hayes' group prepared to do what they believed was right for their country and their children.

They decided to blow up school buses.

News of the bombing spread through the town, sparking anger as it went. Someone had blown up the buses. Janis Canion, longtime teacher at LISD, recalls sitting in a restaurant after church when she first heard the news.

"I remember after church on Sunday night, my husband who was a deputy sheriff at the time — we came into town for dinner, and we went out there, and there was a black policeman out there and he knew my husband and ... he came to us and he was just appalled by it. We were all just appalled by it."

People met on the street, in the restaurants and in the churches, puzzling over what had happened. Two communities already grating against each other felt the ripple of more tremors. People on both sides were sure there would be more violence.

The white community thought it was a sign of a black uprising. Canion remembers people discussing what might happen next. "It was 'What are they going to do? Are they going to retaliate? Are we going to have marches on the schools? Marches in the streets?'" she said.

"The black community thought whites were trying to keep their kids from attending integrated schools in the fall.

George Shankle, now an instructor at Longview ISD's

Dade Center, shakes his head, laughing as he remembers the community reaction. That Sunday morning, members of the black community attended church, but on Monday, he said, they got together and roared.

"You're supposed to come with an empty cup, get your cup filled and get you through the week." Shankle said, "But Mondays, when we (went) back to the meetings, there were people saying, 'We need to make the sheriff do this, the county do this, the district attorney do this.' We had zero pull. Zero. All we could do was sit back, look and observe. Because it had happened."

### National attention

Longview newspapers' reporter Ronnie Morrison began snapping photographs and asking questions at the scene.

The Longview native soon found himself covering a story alongside reporters from the New York Times.

Longview, once best known for its oil production, was becoming a symbol of racism.

Morrison recalls, "Their thinking was if they did something like this it would slow down the integration process dramatically. The FBI got involved. The Texas Rangers got involved. This group was known by law enforcement. What was so ironic about it is that it really didn't do a lot of damage. Whatever they were trying to do didn't happen."

Morrison covered the story from the investigation through the trial and the appeals.

"Freedom and waving the flag," Morrison says, "Those people and their thinking — it was almost a little frightening. What they thought — when you think about our basic freedoms and what July Fourth means — to do something like that on July Fourth is ap-

palling to ... 99 percent of the people in the country, but their thinking was that somehow this was going to bring attention to the problem."

Discussing the effects of the bombings, Morrison notes the bombers ultimately failed in their endeavor.

"There were those who maybe weren't sympathetic. What if this had happened when their children were on the bus? What if these idiots had put a stick of dynamite on the bus during the school year? People started thinking about, well, this is crazy. These children, no matter what the color, deserve an education. We can't have people who are going to harm our children."

### Arrests made

The case closed fairly quickly as law enforcement zeroed in on a group of white residents who, according to the court file, "feared a 'revolution' of black members of the community and were concerned with the events in connection with public school integration."

Elliott and the FBI agent made a swift trip to Shreveport to check the origins of

the dynamite. Meanwhile, local police and federal agents continued interviewing people, and by the end of the month, suspects were identified.

The arrests were made less than a month later on July 27. Few were surprised to see Hayes' picture on the front page of the newspaper because of his reputation, but the arrest of McMaster was a shock.

After the arrests, tensions were so high in Longview that the suspects were held in Tyler to ensure their safety. They stood trial before Judge William Wayne Justice, appointed to the bench the year before. Just before passing sentence on the two men, Justice handed down a decision in a separate case forcing every school in Texas to desegregate. The men were convicted, fined \$11,000 and each was sentenced to 11 years in prison. McMaster served six years; Hayes served eight. They did not testify at their trial, and neither ever made a public statement about the crime.

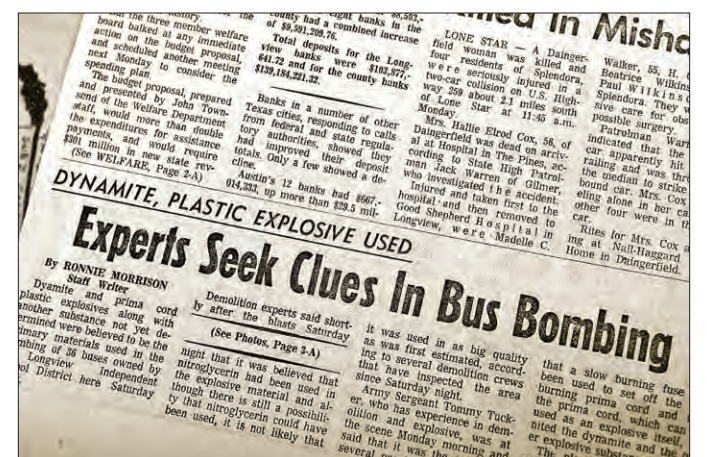
### School begins

As the dust settled, things stabilized in Longview. The beliefs that led to the buses being blown up might have harmed anyone's children, whether they were for or against integration.

As the bombers sat in jail, many parents, teachers and religious leaders worked to find a way to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Of the 33 damaged buses, all but one was repaired and in working order for the first day of school that August.

There were fights in the hallways, fights in the cafeteria and tension all around, but school started with the bell ringing at 8:15 a.m., calling all students, black and white, from the friction outside to the possibilities of the classroom.



Les Hassell/News-Journal Photo

A story in the Longview Morning Journal details events in the bus bombings. Two men eventually were arrested and convicted.

*“People at Longview High School did everything to make us feel welcome. But the problem was they didn’t want us there really, and we didn’t want to be there, really. ... We went into a foreign country with no friends and all of the hostility you can imagine.”*

**George Shankle**  
Former Lobo coach who still works for the district



**‘WITH ALL DELIBERATE SPEED’**

THE INTEGRATION OF LONGVIEW SCHOOLS

# New Lobos’ hard welcome

*As integration spreads from the hallways of Longview High School to the football field, coaches, players and parents struggle to come together for a common cause*

BY VALERIE GORDON  
Contributing writer

**I**N THE FALL OF 1969, Mary C. Womack High School football coach Clifford Stewart had just completed a 0-10 season. Womack had experienced success under Stewart, winning five district championships since his arrival in 1951, but the team suffered in the late 1960s.

Stewart watched his best players leave for Longview High School under the Freedom of Choice Act. He says he’s still bitter recalling the Longview High School scouts sitting at Womack practice, taking note of the fastest players and then entice them away.

Despite that, Stewart had hope. A new group of freshman players looked promising. But in 1970, officials chained the doors of Mary C. Womack High School and instituted its integration into Longview High School.

Over the break, vandals ravaged the school, ruining team video tape and memorabilia. Stewart and his coaching staff collected what trophies were left and led their athletes across town.

## Coach’s challenge

Tommy Hudspeth coached the Lobos from 1967 to 1970. He banned swearing, drinking and tobacco use.

When the schools integrated, Hudspeth faced the challenge of assimilating the players and coaches.

He visited the Womack football team shortly before integration. He told them if they wanted to play, he wanted them. If they didn’t want to play, he didn’t want them. Most of the young men wanted to play.

Halfback James Lomax played for Womack his sophomore and junior years and for the Lobos his senior year. He remembers looking across the massive group of players on the field on the first day of spring training.

“There are so many players,” Lomax remembers thinking. “How can you rise to the top?”

Since he started to play football at Maggie B. Hudson Middle School, Lomax had been a star. Thrilled with the opportunity to start over at a new school with a good team, Lomax put everything he could into those two weeks of spring training. As a child, Lomax had attended many Lobos football games. Before integration, blacks were admitted to games through the back fence and seated on the visitors’ side of the stadium.

During the second week of spring training, the Longview newspaper ran a headline that read, “Lomax Stars in Scrimmage.” That’s when Lomax knew he would make the team. That season, he scored multiple touchdowns, helping the team to a 7-3 season.

Old newspaper clippings detail the Lobo career of James Lomax, who played for Mary C. Womack High School his sophomore and junior years and for the Lobos his senior year. “It was a big deal because I was representing the black neighborhood,” Lomax said of playing for the Lobos.

“It was a big deal because I was representing the black neighborhood,” Lomax said. “They were glad that someone from Womack was doing good.”

The first year of integration wasn’t as easy for the coaches. Stewart became an assistant coach, and his staff was split: George Shankle was assigned to the junior varsity and James Johnson to the sophomore team.

“People at Longview High School did everything to make us feel welcome,” Shankle said. “But the problem was they didn’t want us there really, and we didn’t want to be there, really. That’s when the conflict came. We were people without a country, without a place. We didn’t have anyone to bond with or nothing. We went into a foreign country with no friends and all of the hostility you can imagine.”

Shankle now is an instructor at LISD’s Dade Center. He remembers integration was tough on Hudspeth.

“People in the community started calling him N-lover and all kinds of crap. And so the day after football season he brought us all in and said he was formally resigning from his position,” Shankle said. “He always tried to do what was right. He wanted to do what was for the best interest of the football team.”

## 1971

In 1971, Coach Clint Humphries and his staff of four arrived at Longview High School to replace Hudspeth. Humphries says he possessed experience teaching at integrated high schools, but he was not prepared for the scene that awaited. Police were stationed throughout the building. Fights broke out nearly hourly at the four-way stop in the center of campus.

Humphries felt like a salesman on a new job. He knew if he could convince the players and the staff to buy into his program, they would have a successful team.

“There is no black, there is no white,” said Humphries, surrounded by his new team. “There is only green and white.”

Shankle remembers Humphries attending a parents’ conference early in the 1971 season.

“Clint said, ‘I’m not here to play white kids, I’m not here to play black kids,’” Shankle said. “He told them at a meeting, and some of the parents



Clifford Stewart was Mary C. Womack High School football coach before the school integrated with Longview High. Stewart became a Lobo assistant coach.

walked out.”

Some of the parents did take their kids out of the system.

## New colors

Shortly afterward, Humphries had another meeting, this time with the players and the coaches. He sent the black players to the junior varsity field house and the white players to the varsity field house. Shankle remembers feeling worried that something terrible must have happened.

“Oh no, here we go again,” he thought.

The school board and members from the black community had held multiple meetings trying to figure out a way to diffuse racial tension on campus. Humphries decided the black students, who had been forced to abandon their Womack colors of blue and gold, deserved representation.

“Well, I thought, those black kids have given up their school and joined another school. They’ve given up the pride of Womack and their school colors,” Humphries said. “What I planned to do is to change the colors of Longview High School from Kelly green and white to forest green and white, and add gold. I told the black kids, we’re adding gold so it can be part of yours from Womack. I never did tell the public at that time.”

Shankle said about 30 of the incoming 40 seniors quit during the 1971 season. While racial tensions might have been a factor for a few, he said most left because of the high-intensity military training style that Humphries enforced.

Lobos practices were legendary. Pickups lined the field and spectators watched and cheered the team as they ran drills. Former Longview Lobo and NFL player Jeb Blount was a senior in 1971. To him, Humphries’ military coaching style proved more physically challenging than any regimen he experienced in college or the NFL. In Blount’s eyes, the season was affected by former teammates’ attrition.

The Lobos performed dismally that year, winning only three games. In Humphries’ mind, the 1971 season weeded out the weak-willed. He repeatedly pounded the motto, “Only the strong survive.” Humphries believed the guys who endured the transition and stuck with the program would be a special team in 1972. The incoming seniors looked good — really good.

## 1972

Calvin Portley arrived at Longview High School his



George Shankle was a Lobo coach during the school’s early integration years and still works for the district. He says the integration process was hard on the football team’s head coach at the time, Tommy Hudspeth. “He always tried to do what was right,” Shankle says.

Valerie Gordon  
Special to the News-Journal



**Clint Humphries**  
Former Lobo coach



**Calvin Portley**  
Ex-Lobo player

## Where are they now?

- Jeb Blount is a landman and lives in Longview. He’s a high school football referee on the weekends.
- Chuck Boyd lives in Fort Worth and is assistant superintendent, secondary school leadership, for the Fort Worth Independent School District.
- Mike Canida is retired after 34 years at AT&T and lives in Longview.
- Clint Humphries retired as LISD

- athletics director in 1989 and lives in Longview.
- James Lomax is retired and lives in Longview with his wife, Dorothy.
- Calvin Portley lives in Dallas with his wife, Rossanna, who he met in ninth grade at Longview High School. He is the assistant athletics director for Dallas Independent School District.
- Clifford Stewart is retired and lives in Longview.

sophomore year with an advantage. At 13, he had already integrated into the Bandits, one of Longview’s all-white summer baseball teams. Tall and sinewy, Portley dazzled his classmates with his easy laughter and relaxed demeanor.

His classmate, Chuck Boyd, came from the all-white Forest Park Middle School and had competed against Maggie B. Hudson, Portley’s all-black middle school. The pair became close friends and local celebrities.

As a senior, urged by his peers and administrators, Portley ran for student body president. Despite a 75 percent white student body, he won easily. Boyd was elected vice president. With the student council, the pair began work on supporting a bond proposal to fund a new high school building.

On the football field, they dominated offensively as fast, relentless running backs. Boyd also shone on defense. Every afternoon, a school bus arrived to take the team to the practice field two miles from school.

As the players warmed to each other, bonded by the practices they’d survived, the bus sat empty. Players with trucks pulled up to the four-way stop that had been the scene of black-white confrontations.

“Hey man, y’all going to practice?” Portley would call as he leaned out the window of his pickup. All he’d hear was a “Yup!” and like the

sound of hail, the players’ feet hitting the truck bed. As Portley put it, from there they were rolling.

The Lobos passed the test finishing for the fourth time in Longview history with a perfect 10-0 season. They were going to the Cotton Bowl to face the Plano Wildcats in the bi-district playoffs.

Since 1964, Plano had played 23 playoff games, winning 19 of them. Longview had played one, losing to Richardson in 1967.

Like Christmas morning, the streets of Longview were desolate on the Friday afternoon of Nov. 25, 1972. Most shops in town painted their windows green and white and clicked off their open signs before heading to the pep rally on the south courthouse lawn in an icy rain.

On the road to Dallas, the Lobos tapped their green leather cleats on the school bus floor, joked and chanted the Lobos fight song. Made of soft kangaroo hide, the long rubber cleats on the base of their shoes worked perfectly to provide traction on grass fields. The Cotton Bowl had AstroTurf. Like a patch of ice, it did not give against the Lobos’ cleats.

The players switched to their worn practice shoes that had sharper, studded bases but to no avail.

“It was like Plano was in

the huddle with us because they knew exactly what we were going to do,” says Mike Canida, senior defensive tight end. “We had three plays and a cloud of dust.”

The headline “Plano’s Wildcats Polish off Longview, 27-0” ran across the front page the following day in the Longview Morning Journal.

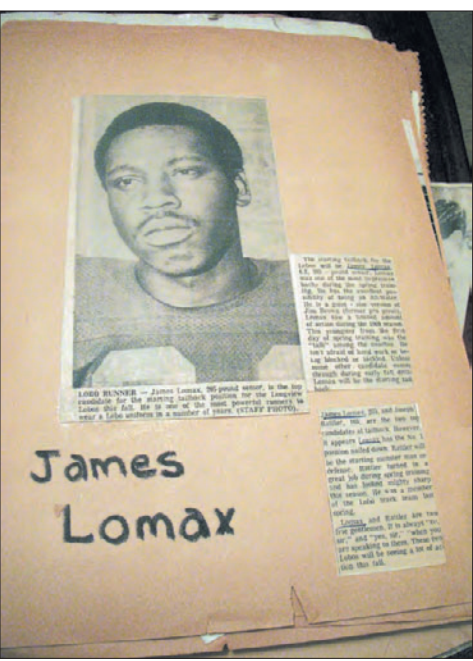
Devastated, the team’s two-hour bus ride back to Longview was made in silence. Portley remembers not letting the feeling of defeat take hold.

The team had accomplished something significant post-integration. In five weeks, the district’s voters would approve the bond for a new Longview High School. Portley and Boyd had taken to the radio promoting the bond and encouraging residents to grant the students a new high school. The bond passed easily.

Including 1972, the Lobos have since had 34 winning seasons and 19 district titles. “That season was a period of time where a group of boys coming from different cultures and backgrounds had a unique opportunity to do something special with each other,” Boyd said.

“They began to believe in each other. To put aside their differences and prejudices and allow themselves to be a part of something special.”

Valerie Gordon  
Special to the News-Journal



**'WITH ALL  
DELIBERATE  
SPEED'**

**THE INTEGRATION  
OF LONGVIEW SCHOOLS**



*"There was just no opportunity much for problems (during integration). I can see where if teachers didn't have good students like I did, they would not have been able to hold out."*

**C.C. Turner**

Former Longview High School math teacher

# In his class, integration was solved

*Mixing white and black students was 'smooth' in C.C. Turner's honors math classes, but not so in other parts of LHS*

**BY ELISE BROOKING**  
Contributing writer

**D**UST PARTICLES from the overhead projector float in the air and catch glints of light as the bulb warms. Students take their assigned seats and immediately start working a calculus problem.

A few chuckles escape from the back row, and C.C. Turner, positioned beside the projector, glimpses over the plastic rim of his glasses and makes sharp eye contact with the gigglers. The classroom returns to its hushed state. The only audible sound is the hum of the machine, accompanied by the scratching of pencil on paper.

## 'Never close-minded'

That was a typical day in the early 1970s. C.C. Turner was one of Longview High School's math teachers, covering subjects from algebra through honors calculus. He also was one of the first teachers to have his own overhead projector — no small feat back then.

In Turner's home, sunlight filters through long window blinds where the linoleum floor meets wood-paneled walls thoughtfully transformed into a homemade scrapbook of sorts. Hundreds of photographs hang by strands of tape, one over the other, in no particular order — former students, friends and family. Even the occasional pet meanders into the collage.

Always one to find the moral of any good story, Turner pauses for dramatic effect.

"You never want to be closed-minded about something new," he says, showing off his cheeky grin. "It might be the best thing you've ever done."

Turner knows a thing or two about keeping an open mind. When Longview High School officially integrated in 1971 (the first years were voluntary), he was teaching higher-level math courses. When others had shut their doors and minds, Turner's stayed open.

"It was a pleasure for me to teach," he says. "Otherwise, I wouldn't have taught."

It is within his classroom walls where Turner's story doesn't always line up with the majority of those from that era.

"We had a very smooth integration at Longview High School," Turner continues. "As far as I was concerned, I never saw any problems."

A tip of the glasses and a stern eye did help, but more over was the fact he usually taught the honor students — higher level students, ready and willing to excel.

"There was just no opportunity much for problems," Turner says. "I can see where if teachers didn't have good students like I did, they would not have been able to hold out."

## 'We've got kids'

George Shankle, assistant high school principal at the time, had different experiences. Shankle recalls pulling "Big Red" off the shelf, the large red paddle board used when disciplinary problems got out of hand.

The worst problem Shankle

recalls was when a black student teacher unknowingly parked her car in what was unspoken "white" territory.

"She parked her car in the redneck parking lot," Shankle, now an instructor at LISD's Dade Center, says slowly.

"They keyed it. Flattened the tires. Cut the top off," he says. "She never came back."

Shankle witnessed more outbursts than the honors math teacher primarily because of his position within the high school. Students who break rules get sent to the principal's office, and if the principal is too busy to handle them, the assistant principal steps in. Shankle often was on his feet.

"Second period they fought. Third period they fought. Fourth period they fought," he says, rubbing his head.

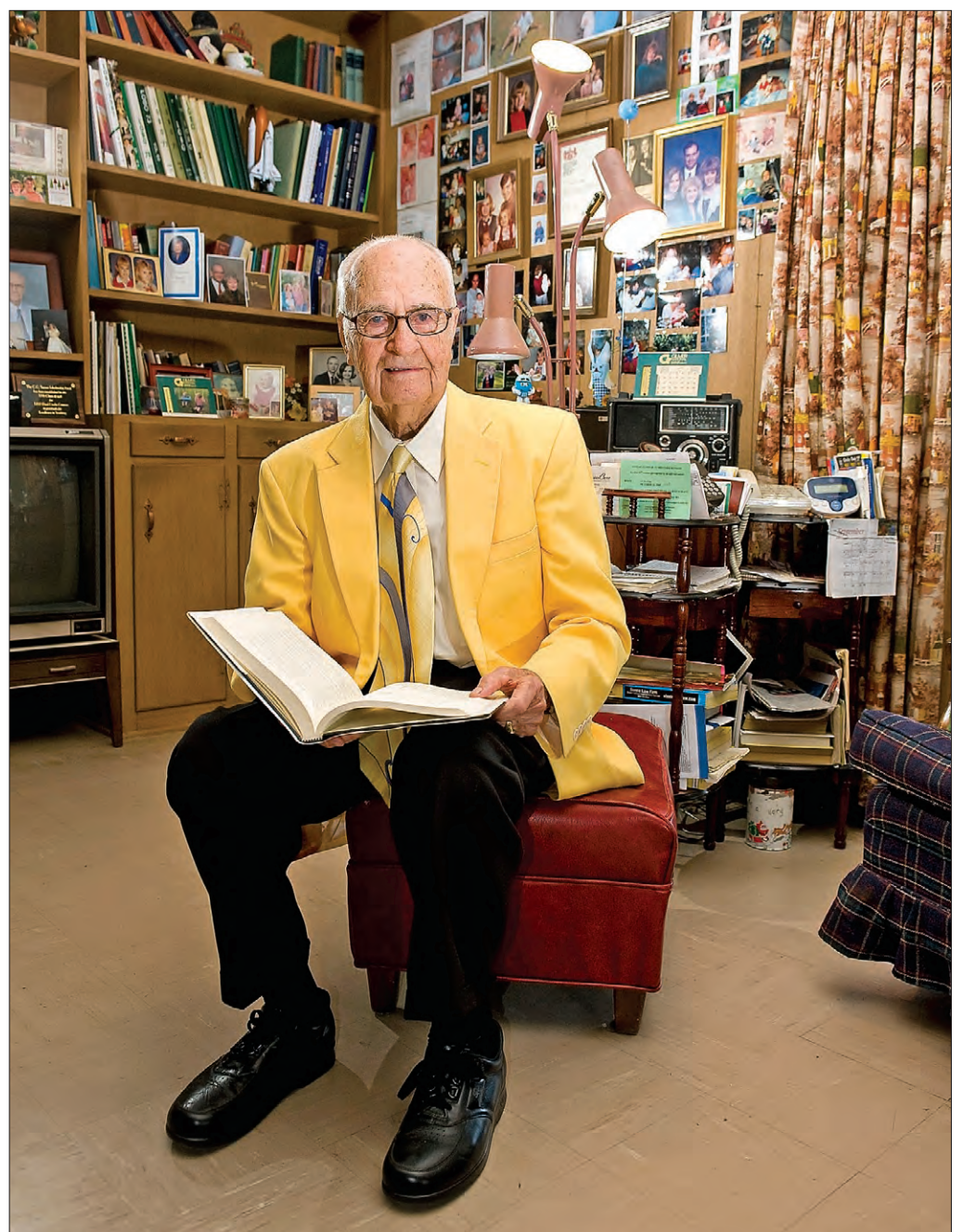
"Let me tell you my philosophy on breaking up fights: you have to take the neutral ground."

Playing Switzerland wasn't easy — especially when the arguments erupted not among students, but among teachers.

"I didn't make your skin white. I didn't make mine black. Forget that," Shankle says, shaking his head and pointing to his own arm. "I'd tell them, we don't have black kids. We don't have white kids. We've got kids."

## Starting from scratch

Womack High School was the black school on the other side of town before its students and teachers were sent to Longview High School. Womack had its own school colors, cheerleaders, student council and star football players. Once merged, the black students had to start from



Les Hassell/News-Journal Photo

Former Longview High School math teacher C.C. Turner taught algebra through honors calculus. He says, unlike in other parts of the school, he never had integration problems in his classrooms.

scratch. They were outsiders.

Looking back now, Lyndell McAllister, a student at LHS at that time, better understands what may have caused the slow acceptance.

"There just wasn't any dialogue happening," she said. "There was no communication. (Integration) just happened. No one really knew how to address it. As a white student, I wasn't aware of all the things that the black students — things that gave them pride — had to give up," she said.

It did take time for acceptance. But people who saw past the separate crayon-coded water fountains, the ridicule and the harsh words came out on top. People such as Michael Wilburn.

Frank Pool, who is white, graduated from Longview High School in 1971.

He says Wilburn, a black high school student, knocked on doors in his community and extended the proverbial olive branch.

"I found out later through his English teacher that he actually went into homes in the black community to calm everybody down and tell them it was going to be OK," Pool said, remembering his classmate and friend.

It's exactly those kinds of students who Turner says made his career a good one. Turner uncovers an old wooden plaque from a stack of multiple ones. It's a Teacher of the Year award, given to him in 1977.

"I just had the best (students). I never did have a black student fail my course," he says. "They were just tremendous."

He says he's never thought much about why it's easy for him to be accepting.

"It was just me being me," he said. But his origins as the son of a tenant farmer during the Great Depression seem to have had a lasting impact on him and the nomadic lifestyle it demanded.

"We moved around a lot.

I went to several schools before I graduated in Upshur County. I'm pretty accepting of most people," he said.

## 'A good teacher'

After turning 90, Turner spent two years volunteering with the Hiway 80 Rescue Mission, tutoring clients of the agency for homeless men and helping them earn their GED and hold steady jobs.

Turner and his overhead projector retired in 1987, but he never misses the opportunity to give another lesson to open ears.

"A good teacher is one that can explain well to those who don't understand very well," he says, quoting one of his own mentors from his college years in Marshall.

Turner gave much to his students, but there is one thing he won't budge on — revealing what those two C's stand for.

"My students came up with 'Complete Control,'" he said, grinning. "I like that."

# Couple's story winds through pre-, post-integration

**BY JON PRIOR**  
Contributing writer

Two teachers found each other in Longview's forgotten schools.

Boyce Jones, a student at Longview Colored High School, saw Muriel Christian sitting under a tree one day in 1950, reading a book.

Jones liked novels, too, and he introduced himself. Jones and Christian spent the summer exchanging books. Years later, they married.

Their careers and their life together wind through the black schools left behind by integration. Jones taught for 31 years in those neighborhoods, and Christian taught from 1960 to 1988.

"All of those neighborhoods no longer exist," Jones said. "The black history is being ignored."

Christian began teaching in September 1960 at East Ward Elementary School. Her husband taught at Rollins Elementary School.

In 1965, Christian was transferred to Womack High School to run the reading lab. She had graduated from



Les Hassell/News-Journal Photo

Muriel Christian Jones holds up her husband Boyce Jones' bronzed baby shoe while teasing him about his age. The couple — both former teachers — met before the integration of Longview schools.

the school in 1951, when it was called Longview Colored High, but her class refused to put "colored" on their diplomas.

Longview Colored High burned down in 1945 and was rebuilt. Following the defi-

ance of the class of 1951, the student council initiated the idea of changing the school's name, and the word "Colored" disappeared from the sign. The school eventually became Mary C. Womack High School.

Few are left in Longview who remember Mary Womack the woman, but Evelyn Williams does. Sitting in her Longview home, Williams closes her eyes and pictures Womack as she was years ago. Womack was the first organist at St. Mark's church in Longview.

"She was a fair-skinned lady with wavy hair, and she was a little hump shouldered. I can see her now sitting on that piano stool, playing that organ," Williams says.

Womack taught Jones' first grade class at North Side Elementary.

"She was a very calm, quiet, but active lady. Charming personality, but very quiet," Jones said.

All that remains of Womack High School today is a dark building filled with the city's supplies.

In 1968, Jones went to school in Rochester, N.Y., to finish a master's degree. Christian was moved to Rollins Elementary, and in the fall of 1970 went to Maggie B. Hudson Elementary School.

In preparation for full integration, the Longview

school district decided to have some white teachers swap places with black teachers. Christian went to South Ward Elementary School. Despite the struggles, she taught there until 1986. Jones was a teacher at Mozelle Johnston Elementary School in the northernmost, predominantly white part of the district.

"That was a crucial time. They were being forced to integrate. More emphasis was put on getting along and the social side of it than the education," Jones said.

When he began teaching at Mozelle Johnston, he was told two things: You cannot give a student an "F," and you cannot use the teacher lounge.

One day, two teachers approached his mobile-unit classroom outside the school, knocked on the door and said, "You're eating with us today. Don't say anything. You're coming with us."

They accompanied Jones into the lounge, where he ate his lunch.

"From that point, it gradually warmed up and warmed up and they found out who I was. This makes a big differ-

ence in attitude with people. From there, I melted in," he said.

Christian's experience with a white faculty was similar. White parents pulled their children from her class. She was ignored and questioned, but she managed. Her background provides a good clue as to how.

"I grew up in an oilfield. The switchmen were white, so they lived on the blacks' property. So, I had been used to seeing them. In fact, there was a relationship going on that would enable us," she said.

"Most of them were not economically able to have luxury. There was a lot of borrowing and begging going on. We were never taught anything about intolerance. People were needing, and it didn't make any difference what color they (were)."

Christian loves people. When she meets someone new she bestows a smile and a confirming hug. She nods when she's asked if integration was the right thing to do, but adds that resolution of differences cannot be forced.

"You can't legislate love."

*"No matter how hard I try, I'm looked at what I am first, then who I am. They say education is the way to move forward. The tragedy for that is if you buy into the idea that you go to school and be a good black, you're still just black."*

**Troy Simmons**  
Longview ISD school board president



**'WITH ALL DELIBERATE SPEED'**

THE INTEGRATION OF LONGVIEW SCHOOLS

## Student success communitywide issue, many say

BY MELISSA CROWE  
Contributing writer

Today's teachers stand at the head of classrooms filled with more unmotivated, uninspired youth than half a century ago.

The Rev. Homer Rockmore, a black minister at Red Oak Missionary Baptist Church, and Bing Canion, Longview's chief juvenile probation officer, who is white, remember the hard work they put in to having such things, they agree times have changed.

"Now there are all these shortcuts, and it's easy," Canion said.

Whether a lack of parent supervision is to blame, or an absence of motivation within the school district, many long-time Longview residents say teenagers' values, ethics and desires have devolved since 1969. For the graduating class of 2008, Longview had a 16.7 percent dropout rate, according to a report by the Texas Education Agency.

### Decisions

Since 2004, Longview juveniles, some as young as 12, have been involved in 382 arrests for drug paraphernalia and narcotics violations, according to the Longview Police Department. The greatest increase was from 79 arrests in 2005 to 95 arrests in 2006. Last year, that figure dropped to 52 juvenile drug-related arrests.

Canion said it's disturbing how times have changed from when he grew up in East Texas. He said he must reassure himself that "kids make mistakes."

Last year, about 1,000 area juveniles were referred to the probation office, he said. Though for the area the county covers, Canion said, the count isn't that high.

"There are things today I never had to deal with growing up," Canion said. "It's very hard to get a kid who is 19 to realize, 'Look, the decision you make today can impact you for the rest of your life.'"

"You want them to understand that, but you don't know if they do," he said. "You hope you give them the skills and decision-making processes to make the right decisions. Somebody who's 15 doesn't see 2015; they see Thursday."

Canion said Longview has money and time invested in mentoring programs to keep at-risk juveniles from entering the criminal system. What the city needs more of is attention to the younger kids, he said.

### Relationships

Rockmore, whose four children and four grandchildren went to Longview High School, noticed a shift in the teaching strategies and the education environment from the days when he attended Mary C. Womack High School.



**Bing Canion**  
Chief juvenile probation officer

**James Brewer**  
LHS principal

Despite updated equipment, he said not everything within the school district improved. Building relationships and interacting with teachers, the way his parents had before, was complicated as black parents were not embraced enough, he said.

"Parents are made to feel — they're talked down to when they go to these campuses," Rockmore said. "They're not embraced enough, welcomed enough."

He wonders whether the number of Longview's youth crimes can be attributed to a lack of responsibility from parents to schools and also to churches. His theory is if parents have a relationship with their children's teachers, then the teachers will be more concerned for those children.

### The tactic

When students are in an environment that leads them to decide that school is not important, James Brewer said the school usually ends up losing that student.

"It's time to start taking some action," said the Longview High School principal. "It's time to stop talking and put things in place."

Brewer is trying to get back to the value of education emphasized in Longview 40 years ago. Whether that means structuring smaller classes to foster parent-teacher and student-teacher relationships, creating programs such as Jobs for American Graduates or the Dropout Prevention Program to help encourage at-risk students to graduate, or joining with churches, local law enforcement and students' families, the school tries to come up with creative solutions to keep teens in school and away from drugs.

The community needs to reach inside itself and give high schoolers aspirations and dreams, Rockmore said. There are few jobs and scarce opportunities compared to the 1960s when South Longview thrived. That's another part of the problem, he said.

"You cannot sit down here on a certain side of town and think that this thing is going to go away," Rockmore said. "This is becoming infested all over our community. We're going to have to do something. Longview is going to have to admit that we've got a major problem."



News-Journal File Photo

U.S. 80 cuts through Longview, bisecting Spur 63, seen here. The road long has been viewed as an economic and social dividing line in the city.

## Highway 80 still seen as racial dividing line

BY SARAH PERRY  
Contributing writer

unity of all mankind."

### 'You're still just black'

Inside the Waffle House off Interstate 20, Simmons watches traffic zip by.

Simmons, 58, remembers the 1960s when he swore he'd never return to Longview after playing a basketball game here. The tension in that gym was crackling like bacon in a frying pan, he said, and attitudes sometimes stand still with time.

Simmons practices dentistry in an office on North Sixth Street. He talks of his experience in present-day Longview.

Inside his office, Simmons is sometimes reminded of the rift that separates Longview, the long divide between black and white. He cleans anyone's teeth. The problem is, not everyone wants him to.

"People come in the door and see that I'm black," Simmons said. "Then they say they'll come back later. They never return."

"No matter how hard I try, I'm looked at what I am first, then who I am. They say education is the way to move forward. The tragedy for that is if you buy into the idea that you go to school and be a good black, you're still just black," Simmons said.

Simmons is torn by the proposed Longview ISD rezoning. The school board has proposed condensing its 28 attendance districts into six and returning to the neighborhood schools that existed before desegregation.

On one hand, the kids who are being bused from one end of the district to the other are exhausted by the hour-long bus ride each way.

Their test scores show no differences if the bus rides are shortened or expanded, Simmons said.

If rezoning happens, the schools will virtually be resegregated because blacks and whites still live in largely segregated neighborhoods.

No easy solution exists for the school board. However, Simmons said, if the demographics don't improve test scores, then why not let the kids enjoy shorter bus rides?

"It's only about what's best for the kids," Simmons said.



**Troy Simmons**  
LISD board president

THE LONG HIGHWAY stretches from east to west, following the dusty pink sunrise and skyline of East Texas. The road is U.S. 80. It cuts across Longview like an invisible Berlin Wall. Some of the city's black residents still see U.S. 80 as the social and economic dividing line.

North of U.S. 80 — also known as Marshall Avenue — sit chain restaurants such as the Olive Garden, Chili's and Texas Roadhouse. South of U.S. 80 are eateries such as Bel's Diner and Sally's Good Food. North of 80, shopping abounds inside the Longview Mall and at the Longview Towne Center. South of 80, a serious shopper tires easily at the Dollar General or Wal-Mart.

South Longview residents shrug when talking about the 20-minute drive for "good food and good shopping." They aren't satisfied with the city's efforts to re-develop the communities in which they live.

Many people who live in the southern part of the city say since the racial turmoil of the 1960s, not much has changed in Longview. Appearances are made, hands are shaken, but beneath exterior niceties are uncertainties and a reluctance to accept differences, they say.

Some residents refuse to talk about Arthur Culver, the first black superintendent of the Longview Independent School District hired in 1999. Others praised his work.

Longtime school board member and now President Troy Simmons said he believed in Culver's work and fought to bring him to Longview.

Once Culver began his job, "Test scores took off like a rocket," Simmons said, but other actions by Culver brought controversy.

Culver says all students weren't receiving the best education possible. He made decisions that he thought were right for the children, but when he tried to implement them, board members tried to "protect people they had known for quite some time," Culver said.

"They wanted me to do things their way," he said. Culver, in a phone interview and by e-mail, did not say he was treated badly in Longview.

"Although East Texas suffers from some of the same vestiges of racism found in the rest of the country, the

Longview community was making real efforts to overcome this history," he said.

Culver worked in Longview until 2002, leaving to run the Champaign Unit No. 4 District in Illinois, where he still is superintendent.

### 'Neglected'

Bel's Diner has been a fixture in South Longview for 17 years. It sits on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard in a small, tidy building with signs plastered over the windows. Outside, a rusted pickup is parked next to a sleek Audi.

Inside the diner, Harvel "Bel" Davis' family is stirring up the daily special: turkey with cranberry sauce, dressing and creamed mashed potatoes. The pork-seasoned green beans are flavored so perfectly, even a vegetarian can't resist them.

Davis, 50, the owner of Bel's, was born and raised in Longview. He talked about what it's like to be black here.

"The southside has more or less been neglected," he said, sitting outside of Bel's on a wooden bench.

He doesn't want to spend more gas driving to the north side of town for supplies and necessities. But he doesn't see a solution for the relatively few business owners and residents who live on south of U.S. 80.

"No one invests over here," he said.

When he speaks of uniting communities, hope twinkles in his eyes. The tables at Bel's are routinely filled with blacks and whites enjoying the food and atmosphere. Davis thinks if people got to know one another better, progress could be made. And yes, life in Longview is better than it was 100 years ago, he says, but it's not where it could be.

"Everybody's not being reached," he said. "We need to start at the ground level, in our homes and teach love and



**Harvel Davis**  
Diner owner

## Color of skin separates congregations across Longview

BY REBECCA HOFFNER  
Contributing writer

As a young girl, the Rev. Diana Casteel of St. Mark Christian Methodist Episcopal Church says she can remember her sisters talking about going to high school in segregated Longview before integration in 1970.

"I always had a problem with that," she said. "With God, there's no black and no white, so why are we separating ourselves on Earth?"

Nearly 40 years after the desegregation of Longview schools, many of the churches in Longview remain self-segre-



**Rev. Diana Casteel**



**Rev. Glynn Stone**



**Rev. Virginia Wall**

gated, despite people sharing the same beliefs.

St. Mark is a small community church on Sapphire Street, off Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The sanctuary seats about 100 people. On this particular morning, about half

that number make up the congregation. The choir sways with the music. The pastor's message draws hearty "amens" as she makes her points.

"(Segregation in the church) is something that I still feel is a problem," Casteel says later. "I don't know if it's because we're in a deeper part of the South ... people talk about God, but still have hatred."

On the other side of town,

there's a much bigger church, Moberly Baptist. Its sanctuary seats 1,200 people and looks to be nearly full. The song lyrics are projected onto video screens.

Moberly's pastor, the Rev. Glynn Stone, says the ratio of black to white in his church is not what it should be.

"I challenged our members on this just last week," he said. "If we loved the way that God loves, we'd be a better reflection of what the community looks like."

One congregation in Longview has the reputation of embracing a racial mix of members. Wesley-McCabe

United Methodist Church's pastor, Virginia Wall, was appointed and sent to it a year ago from the Caribbean, and she says she was a little nervous about what she'd find.

"I'd heard about East Texas and the history of racial tension," she said.

She credits the church's diversity to the fact that two churches, Wesley Methodist and McCabe Methodist, one predominantly white church and one predominantly black church, decided to merge about 10 years ago.

"They lost some members when that happened," Wall said. "But the people who

stayed thought that it would be a good thing to show Longview that it could work."

Believers at all three churches agree: they should be united by faith, and not separated by the color of their skin.

"My passion is to have a church that is defined by being Christian, not black or white," Wall said. "The love of Christ transcends all boundaries."

"I think a lot of the segregation in churches happens because everyone is comfortable with familiarity," Stone said. "You want to worship with people you have things in common with. You want to feel at home when you worship."