



# Blacks in White Colleges: Oklahoma's Landmark Cases

*George Lynn Cross*

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When George Lynn Cross arrived to teach botany at the University of Oklahoma in the summer of 1934, racial segregation was so strong in Norman that no African American dared remain within the city limits after sundown. Almost ten years later when Cross became president of the university, the full extent of Oklahoma's segregation laws came sharply into focus.

This book is President Cross's story of the events leading to the desegregation of the University of Oklahoma in 1948, with the admission of George W. McLaurin to the Graduate School of Education. Earlier, a young black woman, Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher, had applied to the OU School of Law and been denied admission because of her race. With the help of attorneys from the NAACP she took her case to the U.S. Supreme Court. The High Court equivocated, and a "separate but equal" law school was hastily established in Oklahoma City as a branch of all-black Langston University. It was not until three years later—and then only after the intervention of President Cross, who personally overrode "the law's delay"—that Ms. Fisher was able to study at the University of Oklahoma, from which she later graduated with honors.

Cross places these momentous events in historical context. The story of desegregation at the University of Oklahoma, a landmark in the continuing struggle for racial equality in the United States, makes for an engrossing book.



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