Journal of Negro Education

Welcome Consequences and Fulfilled Promise: Julius Rosenwald Fellows and "Brown v. Board of Education"
Author(s): Alfred Perkins
Source: *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (Summer, 2003), pp. 344-356
Published by: Journal of Negro Education
Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/3211252
Accessed: 05-02-2019 00:45 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at https://about.jstor.org/terms

Journal of Negro Education is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Journal of Negro Education*

This content downloaded from 108.48.156.86 on Tue, 05 Feb 2019 00:45:17 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Welcome Consequences and Fulfilled Promise: Julius Rosenwald Fellows and Brown v. Board of Education

Alfred Perkins

In preparing its second brief in the Brown v. Board *case, the NAACP relied heavily on the knowledge and research skills of many scholars, a number of whom had pursued graduate studies with awards from the Julius Rosenwald Fund, a foundation devoted to the advancement of African Americans and improvement in race relations. Beyond helping talented people earn advanced degrees, the fellowship program had the larger purpose of strengthening Black leadership to effect social change. Examination of the role played in* Brown *by these Rosenwald fellows reveals their significant contribution to this key Supreme Court decision, an outcome keeping with the Fund's main goal.*

When the leaders of the Julius Rosenwald Fund decided in the late 1920s to move in a new direction, there was no way to determine what the results might be. With its central commitment to the advancement of African Americans and improvement in race relations, for over a decade, the Fund had concentrated on building schools in Black communities throughout the rural South. So successful had this effort been that when that program ended in 1932, over 5,300 educational buildings had been constructed, facilities that could accommodate one third of all African American children in southern schools (Embree & Waxman, 1949, p. 55). More fully than any other foundation at the time, the Rosenwald Fund even then "permeated the educational experiences of the Negro" (Bullock, 1970, p. 139).

With the extensive reorganization of the Fund in 1928, however, its resources began to move from constructing buildings to preparing people. The new thrust was embodied in a program of fellowships, available primarily to African Americans, but extended in the 1930s to White Southerners seeking to improve Black-White relations. Following a description of that program, this article focuses on a number of fellowship recipients and their contributions to the most significant civil rights decision of the 20th century, the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas.* These fellows, by using their talents and scholarly abilities to effect societal change, advanced the Rosenwald Fund's most cherished purpose.

The Fellowship Program

The fellowship program began somewhat tentatively, with grants made primarily to well-established writers and scholars—James Weldon Johnson and W.E.B. DuBois are prominent examples—or to persons seeking further training in certain professional fields, notably medicine, librarianship, nursing, and home economics. The latter category repre-

Journal of Negro Education, Vol. 72, No. 3 (Summer 2003)
Copyright © 2003, Howard University

This content downloaded from 108.48.156.86 on Tue, 05 Feb 2019 00:45:17 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

sents what has been called an "institutional approach" to grant making, that is, an effort to strengthen institutions serving African Americans through additional training of staff members. By 1934, however, emphasis shifted to preparation of artists, scientists, college teachers, and scholars, without regard to professional affiliation. As the Fund's annual report for that year explained, "a few score superior persons thoroughly educated" would do more for minority advancement and race relations than "that number of average students and teachers, however worthy and indigent" (cited in Bielke, 1997, pp. 9–10). Henceforward the fellowships were to be awarded to persons of unusual promise, with the creative potential to contribute to human knowledge and improvement in race relations. During the 20-year life of the program, 586 African Americans received awards (Embree & Waxman, 1949, pp. 238–52).

The basic purpose of the fellowships was to enable recipients to develop their talents to the full, while earning valuable professional credentials. Underlying this purpose, however, was the Fund's conviction that the emergence of African Americans with distinguished careers and impressive accomplishments would give the lie to the notion of racial inferiority. Such conspicuous success would demonstrate that Black achievements were limited not by inherent inadequacy, but by the barriers of institutionalized racism, social isolation, educational deprivation, and lack of economic opportunity. Moreover, the fellowship program aimed to create a cadre of well-prepared leaders, men and women who would command wide respect, understand social structures and how to change them, and work to improve the quality of life for Black citizens across the nation. With that in mind, the fellowship program concentrated on the rising generation, with most awards going to recent college graduates (Rosenwald Fund, 1936). The emphasis, in short, was to be on perpetuating and expanding DuBois's "talented tenth."

Responsibility for pursuing those purposes rested essentially with three men—Edwin Rogers Embree, Will W. Alexander, and Charles S. Johnson. Throughout the life of the program, these three were members of what was usually a five-person committee to select recipients. Moreover, they were the key figures of the Fund as a whole, both as executives and long-time trustees. Embree served as the Fund's only president, coming to that position from a vice presidency at the Rockefeller Foundation. Alexander spent much of his career as Executive Director of the Atlanta-based Council for Interracial Cooperation, served as Acting President of the newly established Dillard University, and then joined the Fund staff as vice president in 1940. Johnson, the only professional scholar and African American of these three and himself an early fellowship recipient, had directed research and publications for the National Urban League and been instrumental in advancing the careers of numerous figures of the Harlem Renaissance. Leaving New York in 1928, Johnson created and directed a nationally recognized sociological research center at Fisk University before becoming president of that institution in 1946. Johnson and Alexander also served the Fund as Co-Directors for Race Relations (Embree & Waxman, 1949, pp. 191–202, 235–6).

During the two decades of the Rosenwald Fund's life, these men worked assiduously to improve the situations of Black Americans. Outspoken opponents of racial discrimination, they saw education as a key element in helping Blacks move into full civil equality. Hence, as the fellowship program took on increasing importance during the 1930s, they exercised great care in choosing recipients, making awards only to those considered, in one of Embree's favorite expressions, "first-rate." Even as Embree, Alexander, and Johnson sought to expand the ranks of Black leadership, however, they could not have foreseen how important these scholars would be in the struggle to end school segregation.

This content downloaded from 108.48.156.86 on Tue, 05 Feb 2019 00:45:17 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

The Initial Stage: Three Fellows

Toward the end of 1950, fresh from somewhat ambiguous legal victories regarding public higher education, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was ready to challenge racial segregation in the nation's primary and secondary schools. The vehicle for that challenge was to be five lawsuits, pursued more or less simultaneously, in South Carolina, Kansas, Virginia, Delaware, and the District of Columbia. From the beginning Thurgood Marshall, Counsel of the NAACP and Director of its Legal Defense and Education Fund (LDEF), envisioned eventual appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. Marshall and his advisers understood fully the magnitude of the task before them, for in attacking segregation in the public schools, they were in fact attacking the whole system of legally enforced segregation that had been in place for more than a half-century. In light of this immense challenge, the NAACP needed to enlist the help of the best minds it could find. Many of those who answered the call had held Rosenwald fellowships.

The first of the Rosenwald fellows to be involved in these cases was Robert Lee Carter, a staff lawyer for the LDEF. Youngest son of a widowed mother of eight children, Carter was an alumnus of prestigious Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. After Lincoln, he earned the LL.B. at age 23 from the Howard University Law School, graduating first in his class with one of the highest grade standings in the school's history and with plans to earn a doctorate in constitutional law (Kluger, 1975, pp. 501–3). Even at that early age, he was keenly interested in civil liberties, particularly how federal courts had extended constitutional protection for individuals under the First and Fourteenth Amendments (Carter, 1940). When he applied in 1940 for a Rosenwald, the selection committee easily recognized his great potential and awarded him one of the first fellowships for graduate study in law. The fellowship enabled him to earn the LL.M. at Columbia University with a thesis on the ways the "due process" clause of the Fourteenth Amendment had been interpreted by federal courts to contravene discriminatory state laws and practices (Rosenwald Fund, 1940). Call to military service during World War II prevented continuation of his graduate work, and after early discharge from the Army Air Corps, he joined the LDEF in 1944. By 1950, he had come into his own at the LDEF and was deeply involved in the school desegregation cases (Kluger, 1975, pp. 341, 503–4).

Early on Carter became curious about the psychological effects of racial segregation on African American youth. His search for research-based information soon led him to two New York social psychologists, Kenneth B. and Mamie Phipps Clark, a young husband-and-wife team whose investigations indicated that awareness of racial differences had a profoundly negative effect on the personality development of Black children. A decade earlier, as their research was just getting underway, the Clarks had won the support of the Rosenwald Fund. When the two applied for fellowships in 1940, Rosenwald President Edwin Embree concluded, "No doubt these are brilliant people" (cited in Bielke, 1997, pp. 9–10). The Fund awarded them a joint grant that year, and then renewed Mamie Clark's fellowship for two more years of doctoral work (Embree & Waxman, 1949, p. 241).

In her fellowship application, Mamie Clark described her dissertation project, how in interviews with Black children she would use sets of dolls to assess racial awareness and self-image (M. Clark, 1940). That Rosenwald-funded research, more fully developed after completion of her degree, served to launch both her career and that of her husband. More importantly, it was to provide the critical psychological underpinning for the NAACP's argument against school segregation. As Kenneth Clark (1955) later explained, such racial discrimination caused in Black youngsters "deep feelings of inferiority and a sense of personal humiliation," confusion about one's personal worth, even self-hatred (pp. 63–65).

This content downloaded from 108.48.156.86 on Tue, 05 Feb 2019 00:45:17 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Convinced of the significance of the Clarks' conclusions, Carter had to persuade Thurgood Marshall, as well as other skeptical NAACP lawyers, of the value of bringing social scientific considerations into the litigation. That daunting task completed, Carter then enlisted the Clarks' help in the school desegregation cases. Results of the "doll research" were first used in 1951 in the South Carolina case. Kenneth Clark testified in that case, as he did a few months later in the Delaware suit. Early in 1952, Mamie Clark accompanied her husband to Richmond where they both gave testimony in the Virginia case (Kluger, 1975, pp. 404–48, 503–58, 626–39).

Going well beyond the role of expert witness, Kenneth Clark also was commissioned to recruit other researchers in evaluating the effects of school segregation. After assembling a group of prominent social scientists to conduct further research, he coordinated their work and served as liaison between them and the NAACP legal staff. The paper resulting from this effort, "The Effects of Segregation and the Consequences of Desegregation: A Social Science Statement" (Clark et al., 1951) was drafted by Clark and later signed by the 32 psychologists, anthropologists, sociologists, and psychiatrists from major Northeastern and Midwestern institutions he had recruited (Kluger, 1975, p.403).[1] Recognizing the paper's importance, the NAACP not only drew on its contents but appended the entire document to the brief submitted to the Supreme Court in 1952. Thus in the initial litigation, months before the desegregation cases were taken up by the Supreme Court, three Rosenwald fellows had played significant roles.

The Second Stage: Four More Fellows

The school desegregation cases, consolidated under the name of the Kansas case, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, were heard by the U.S. Supreme Court during its 1952–53 session. Toward the end of the session, the Court restored the cases to its docket, instructing the litigants to be prepared to reargue them in the fall. In its order, the Court asked for argument on five questions. Of particular interest to the Court were the understandings of the Congress that passed the Fourteenth Amendment, and the state legislatures that ratified it, regarding the Amendment's application to segregation in public schools. In addition, the Court asked for argumentation about the kind of decree that would be appropriate to end segregated schools if in fact the Court decided such schools violated the Constitution. The need to respond to the Court with convincing answers, with limited time to prepare this second brief, touched off a frenzy of activity at the LDEF. So much was done in so little time that June, July, and August of 1953 came to be known in LDEF lore as "the six-months summer" (Kluger, 1975, 782–783).

Pressured to move forward rapidly, Thurgood Marshall apportioned the work among his staff and a growing number of consultants and volunteers. Robert Carter, now Marshall's right-hand man, was given responsibility for coordinating all the preparations for reargument. In addition he was to direct the legal research to be conducted by NAACP staff and a small army of sympathetic lawyers from around the country. In time, Carter was also to draft much of the reargument brief. In this central role, he was second only to Marshall himself (Kluger, 1975, pp. 503, 788; Tushnet, 1994, p. 35).

Since the Court's questions focused not just on legal issues, but historical matters as well, it was necessary to gather additional experts to develop information that would buttress the arguments of the NAACP's lawyers. Direction of nonlegal research was vested

[1]Among the 32 signers of the document were four fellows—the two Clarks, anthropologist Allison Davis, and sociologist Ira DeA. Reid. In the paper's 32 footnotes the research of these four were cited five times and that of another Rosenwald fellow, sociologist E. Franklin Frazier, twice (for the complete text, see Clark et al., 1951).

This content downloaded from 108.48.156.86 on Tue, 05 Feb 2019 00:45:17 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

in John Aubrey Davis, Professor of Political Science at Lincoln University. With a career that alternated between academic appointments and government service, Davis was well suited for this role. Nor is it incidental that Davis and Carter knew each other well. In fact, Carter had been Davis's student at Lincoln and Davis had recommended Carter in glowing terms to the Rosenwald selection committee (J. A. Davis, 1940). Like Carter, Davis had pursued his graduate degrees with a Rosenwald fellowship, first awarded in 1938, then twice renewed (Embree & Waxman, 1949, p. 242).

Moving quickly to organize the work of his group, Davis named as his chief assistant and Deputy Director of Nonlegal Research Mabel Murphy Smythe, an economist just returned from two years of teaching in Japan (M. Smythe-Haith, personal communication, July 19, 2000). He then cast around for other scholars with the necessary knowledge, investigative skills, and commitment to work intensively for the next several months. When he had found people with these qualities, he assigned to five of them preparation of various position papers. Horace Mann Bond, President of Lincoln University and a specialist in the history and sociology of education, was asked to concentrate on the Court's question regarding the Fourteenth Amendment. His challenging task was to determine how Congressmen and state legislators viewed the Amendment's application to public schools. Research on Reconstruction and the circumstances of its demise was assigned to Johns Hopkins historian C. Vann Woodward, a leading authority on the post-Civil War South. To John Hope Franklin, Professor of History at Howard University and author of the most authoritative account of the African American experience, went responsibility for a monograph on the emergence of legally enforced segregation in the late 19th century (Kluger, 1949, pp. 783–91).[2]

All four of these scholars had been Rosenwald fellows. Three of them—Smythe, Franklin, and Bond—had earned their doctorates with Rosenwald funding (Franklin, 1947; Smythe, 1942a; Williams, 1972, p. 99). Woodward, the only White in the group, had received a post-doctoral fellowship used during the months before the United States' entry into World War II. Working in the Library of Congress, he had completed considerable research (to be published only a decade later) that would figure in the school desegregation cases (Roper, 1987, p. 127; Woodward, 1951a, p. xi). Such an application of scholarship to the struggle against racial discrimination typified the other fellows as well.

Even in their student days, Smythe, Davis, and Franklin revealed a disposition to link academic research and social advocacy. Mabel Smythe, working on a doctorate in economics and law at the University of Wisconsin in the early 1940s, had written her dissertation on how the practice of tipping tended to depress wage levels in certain occupations. Nearing the end of that project, she emphasized that her purpose was not just to satisfy a degree requirement, but to develop evidence useful in efforts to raise the minimum wage and to extend its coverage to all those at the low end of the pay scale, an inordinate number of whom were African American (Smythe, 1942b). John A. Davis, a civil rights activist when only 21 years old, derived from his experience a deep concern about the neglect of political science instruction in historically Black colleges. In that neglect he saw a failure to prepare African Americans to use political mechanisms for their own benefit and societal uplift (Davis, 1938). His commitment to earn a doctorate at Columbia University, and his subsequent teaching can be regarded as a personal attempt to remedy that shortcoming.

Unlike Davis, John Hope Franklin was to concentrate his professional activity on teaching and scholarship. His scholarly promise had been recognized early in his graduate

[2]The other papers were assigned to legal scholars Alfred H. Kelly and Howard J. Graham (Kluger, 1975, pp. 783–91).

This content downloaded from 108.48.156.86 on Tue, 05 Feb 2019 00:45:17 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

career. After his first year at Harvard, Franklin was endorsed "with unrestrained enthusiasm" by one of the most distinguished members of that faculty (Schlesinger, 1937). Another of his teachers predicted, presciently, that within 20 years Franklin could be "the dean of Negro historians in this country" (Buck, 1937). Yet Franklin was committed to scholarship not for the sake of scholarship alone, but as "the basis for intelligent thought and action" regarding social issues. With his sensibilities quickened by the infamous Tulsa race riots of 1921, in which more than 100 Blacks were killed and his father's law office was destroyed by fire, he saw careful collection and analysis of historical data as a necessary prelude to urgently needed societal reform (Franklin, 1937).

The linkage between scholarly research and change had long been evident to Horace Mann Bond, the most senior of the Rosenwald fellows working for the LDEF in 1953. Moreover, he applied that understanding specifically to the issue of segregated schools. As early as 1932, he had published an article contending that equalization of educational opportunity, even within a segregated system, required equality of funding (Bond, 1932, pp. 49–59). And a few years later publication of his dissertation, *Negro Education in Alabama: A Study in Cotton and Steel*, made clear the forces shaping the education of African Americans not just in Alabama but throughout the South (Williams, 1972). Indicative of the significance of the work, arguably Bond's most important scholarly achievement, is the fact that the publication costs were underwritten by the Rosenwald Fund (Williams, 1972, pp. 113–9).

Bond's connection with the Fund and its principal officers was extremely close. The grants received in 1931 and 1932 funded the only full-time graduate study he ever had. During the mid-1930s, he had held temporary positions with the Fund and Rosenwald intervention helped him obtain his first teaching position at renowned Fisk University, where he came under the tutelage of Fund trustee Charles S. Johnson. And when Bond moved, somewhat reluctantly, from college teaching into administration, it was at the behest of the Fund, first as academic dean at Rosenwald-sponsored Dillard University (where Fund leader Will Alexander was acting president), then into the presidency of Fort Valley State College, another institution brought into being by Rosenwald initiative. Most important perhaps, Fund president Edwin Embree steadily promoted Bond's career advancement (Williams, 1972, pp. 99–113, 129–131).

Historians, Social Scientists, and More Fellows

For the nonlegal research, Horace Bond's involvement was of great importance. Early in the process he outlined an extensive agenda suggesting areas of investigation, sources of information, and leads to be pursued (Williams, 1972, p. 158). His outline guided the work of younger scholars such as Mabel Smythe, who plowed through mountains of material at the New York Public Library. Research covered debates in the 39th Congress, memoirs and biographies of congressional leaders, state statutes and constitutions before and after the Fourteenth Amendment, journals of state constitutional conventions and legislatures in the South, relevant newspapers of the period, and numerous secondary works. Particular attention was paid to the views of the Committee of Fifteen—the Senators and Congressmen who had hammered out the language of the Fourteenth Amendment and other Reconstruction legislation. Also examined were the Black Codes in the Southern states and the historical records of public education in those states (Davis, 1953). Smythe, who researched, summarized, and edited much of this material, searched for "any treasury of information that would bolster the [NAACP] argument" (M. Smythe, personal communication, July 19, 2000).

This content downloaded from 108.48.156.86 on Tue, 05 Feb 2019 00:45:17 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Later in the summer, Bond, working in a West 43rd Street hotel room in New York, organized the gathered material into a monograph that linked governmental actions with developments in public education. From the information at hand, he drew two key inferences, both of which figured prominently in the NAACP brief and, subsequently, in the Supreme Court decision. He first moved the question of public education into a new context. Until the mid-19th century, he pointed out, education had been a matter of personal initiative, a social right perhaps, but not a right subject to governmental protection. The expansion of public education, however, changed that situation. When school systems began to be organized by local governments and funded by tax revenues, and when state laws required attendance, education became a civil right. Thus, he contended, education was now subject to the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of "equal protection of the laws" (Tushnet, 1994, p. 199).

Bond's second point was even more imaginative. Reviewing the new constitutions of the former Confederate states, he called attention to the fact that none mentioned segregated education. The omission of that topic he interpreted as evidence Southern legislators recognized that the Fourteenth Amendment would prohibit all legal forms of racial discrimination, including segregated public schooling. Precisely because they understood that education would be subject to the equal protection of the laws, he claimed, the lawmakers had no reason to address the issue in a constitutional provision. Based on the absence of documentary evidence, more hypothesis than fact, Bond's interpretation was nevertheless incorporated into the NAACP brief, and it served to counter arguments of the defense lawyers (Kluger, 1975, pp. 786–7; NAACP, 1953a, pp. 140–2).

Gaps in the historical record were not so great a problem for Vann Woodward and John Hope Franklin. Explaining the circumstances that ended Reconstruction, Woodward drew heavily on two books he had published some months earlier. Much of the research for the books had been accomplished under his Rosenwald fellowship in 1940–41 and he now found it expedient to use in his NAACP paper information and even language from one of those works.[3] John Hope Franklin investigated the strategies and intentions of Southerners who perpetuated and enforced segregation toward the end of the 19th century. To him, as to Woodward, it was clear that the egalitarian disposition that underlay all the Civil War amendments had been steadily, indeed deliberately, undercut after Reconstruction. Franklin's words were direct: The South's leaders had "defied, ignored, and worked against every conception of equality laid down in the Fourteenth Amendment and subsequent legislation" (quoted in Kluger, 1975, p. 789). Franklin's perspective and some of his prose, like Woodward's, was incorporated into the NAACP brief, and their published works were cited in footnotes a total of eight times.

Though the former Rosenwald scholars and other researchers could not produce incontestable evidence supporting the NAACP position, this was less critical than it might at first appear. For as Thurgood Marshall confided to his associates, a "nothin'-to-nothin' score" on the historical record would lead to an NAACP victory (Kluger, 1975, p. 782). Lawyers for the defendant states were similarly unable to discover sufficient backing for their position to convince the Court. In issuing its decision, the Court acknowledged that the thinking of the 39th Congress and the state legislatures about the Fourteenth Amendment could not be determined "with any degree of certainty" (*United States Reports*, 347, p. 489).

[3]In drafting the NAACP brief, Robert Carter sometimes incorporated directly wording from the five commissioned papers. On pages 54–7 of his draft (in Clark, *Papers*, Box 64, f.3) are complete sentences identical to passages in Woodward's 1951 *Reunion and Reaction*, pages 4–5 and 209–12.

This content downloaded from 108.48.156.86 on Tue, 05 Feb 2019 00:45:17 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

The place of historical considerations in the Court's decision is open to some question. One authority on *Brown* contends that the work of Horace Bond, itself largely historical, spoke more directly to what the justices sought than did the accounts of legislative history (Tushnet, 1994, p. 199). Another believes that Justice Felix Frankfurter, who had framed the Court's five questions in the first place, had satisfied himself about the historical record even before the cases were argued the second time (Kluger, 1975, p. 828). Vann Woodward (1986, p. 89), reflecting some years later, concluded the Court was far less taken by the interpretations of historians—Franklin, himself, and others—than by the research of the social scientists. If Woodward is correct in thinking that the historians contributed little to winning the case, they at least helped to insure the NAACP would not lose. It was their information that produced the stalemate that Thurgood Marshall needed (Williams, 1972, p. 159).

Among the social scientists, Kenneth Clark is of greatest importance. In its June order, the Court had asked for argument on how it might best proceed if it ruled that school segregation violated the Fourteenth Amendment. To address this question, the NAACP collected and analyzed examples of desegregation in order to suggest workable approaches. Clark took responsibility for developing the research plan and then called upon a cadre of social psychologists to aid in the collection of data. Assisted by Mamie Clark and others, Clark organized the information, drew from it principles for implementing desegregation, and prepared the final report.[4] Though the substance of Clark's report is not immediately evident in the NAACP brief, it undoubtedly served to inform the lawyers who prepared that document.

Significant as the contributions of these scholars were to the *Brown* decision, they were not the only Rosenwald fellows involved. In September 1953, shortly before the brief was to be submitted to the Supreme Court, the LDEF held a three-day conference in New York to critique the work done to date. Many of the 42 participants were lawyers, but also in attendance were educators, historians, and social scientists of various stripes. Position paper authors Woodward, Franklin, and Bond participated, as did Carter, John A. Davis, and Smythe. They were joined by three other Rosenwald recipients—Rayford Logan, Charles H. Thompson, and Allison Davis (NAACP, 1953b). Rayford Logan, a prominent Howard University historian, had a long record of unflinching hostility to segregation and deep commitment to civil rights causes (Janken, 1993). Also from Howard University was Charles H. Thompson, Dean of the Graduate School and Founder and Editor-in-Chief of *The Journal of Negro Education*. Under Thompson's editorship the *Journal*, to which many Rosenwald fellows contributed, did much to document problems arising from school segregation and to emphasize the need for sweeping change.[5] Allison Davis, a distinguished University of Chicago anthropologist and elder brother of John A. Davis, had earlier published research on school segregation in Louisiana and Mississippi (Davis & Dollard, 1940). Not present, but influential nonetheless, was Rosenwald fellow and Fund official Charles S. Johnson. His *The Negro in American Civilization* (1930) was cited three times in Part I of the NAACP brief.

Contributions and Commonalities

The NAACP brief was submitted in November 1953 and the Court issued its historic decision the following May. Careful reading of that decision, coupled with an understand-

[4]The full report, "Desegregation: An appraisal of the evidence," was published in *The Journal of Social Issues* (Clark, 1953). Clark edited that issue.

[5]The July 1935 issue, devoted to "The Courts and the Negro Separate School," (Thompson, 1935) is one example. During the 1940s, Thompson himself helped the NAACP on school segregation cases; he also served on the Rosenwald fellows' selection committee (Rosenwald Fund, JRFC, Box 374, f. 5).

This content downloaded from 108.48.156.86 on Tue, 05 Feb 2019 00:45:17 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

ing of how the winning argument was prepared, leads to deep appreciation for the work of the Rosenwald fellows. The research of Mamie and Kenneth Clark furnished the cornerstone on which the social scientific aspect of the NAACP's argument rested. Kenneth Clark mobilized an impressive group of social scientists whose collective judgment, expressed in two key documents, gave great weight to the NAACP's position. The investigative strategy developed by Horace Bond and his interpretation of material gathered by Mabel Smythe and others produced information and perspectives that proved persuasive to the Court. Historians Franklin and Woodward provided evidence that, in the decades following the Civil War, legal justification for separation of the races was at best ambiguous. John A. Davis managed to keep all the nonlegal research moving forward against a very tight deadline. Robert Clark directed the legal research, coordinated the work of dozens of lawyers, and drafted much of the brief, even while exercising day-to-day responsibility for the entire enterprise. And in addition to these eight fellows centrally involved in preparation of the case, six others offered critiques or were cited in the brief.

The vital role played by these fellows naturally calls attention to the Rosenwald Fund itself. To what extent did the fellowships contribute, albeit indirectly, to the desegregation effort? Had they not received their awards, would these fellows have had the knowledge and skills to help as they did? Endowed with superior intelligence and high motivation as all were, some probably would have found a way to complete advanced degrees even without the fellowship, as Woodward, Thompson, and Kenneth Clark already had before receiving their awards. Others, like Robert Carter and Horace Bond perhaps, would have found it difficult to pursue graduate study. For each of them, however, the Rosenwald meant an opportunity to concentrate on formal academic preparation or to engage in productive research. Winning the fellowship was itself an accomplishment, an affirmation of ability, and a source of confidence about one's career path. It meant above all a chance to demonstrate talent, to improve prospects for professional advancement, and to increase one's contribution to society. The fellowships, it seems fair to conclude, served to establish the recipients professionally, to enable them to develop the expertise that would make them ready when the NAACP needed their help.

What is there about these fellows that distinguish them as a group? They were linked to each other by a variety of personal and professional connections, and all but Woodward shared unhappy experiences common to African American intellectuals. Yet what truly bound them together was not acquaintance and shared experience, but similarity of outlook, a particular view of the social purposes of their scholarly vocation. What they held, along with Rosenwald Fund officials, was the profound conviction that scholarly endeavor could provide the basis for societal reform. Knowledge was valuable for its own sake, but pursuing it for its own sake was not sufficient; it had to be socially useful as well. And useful in a very specific way—for revealing the evils of racism, for eliminating racial barriers, for bridging the gap between Black and White, for enabling minority Americans to move freely into the social and economic mainstream. Activists all, these men and women were devoted to change for the benefit of persons of African American descent, and ultimately for Americans in general. Civil rights was Woodward's "abiding and transcending passion" and the NAACP's school integration efforts engaged him—in moral, material, and scholarly terms—more completely than any other issue (Roper, 1987, p. 164). The career of Rayford Logan typifies even more strongly this fusion of scholarly activity and engagement in reform efforts (Janken, 1993). Highly educated people who had been victimized by racial discrimination, Mabel Smythe pointed out, saw scholarship as "one way to get at [segregation] and defeat it. Everybody had a feeling of obligation

This content downloaded from 108.48.156.86 on Tue, 05 Feb 2019 00:45:17 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

to push the ball a little further toward the net" (M. Smythe, personal communication, July 19, 2000).[6]

Their perspective was perhaps most eloquently expressed by John Hope Franklin. In an essay written a decade after *Brown*, Franklin affirmed:

> The Negro scholar must use his scholarship to correct the findings of pseudo psychologists and sociologists regarding Negro intelligence, Negro traits, and the alleged Negro propensity for crime. . . . He must provide the social engineers with the facts of the Negro ghetto, the overt and the subtle discriminations inflicted on the Negro in almost every aspect of his existence, the uses and misuses of political and economic power to keep the Negro in a subordinate position in American life. There is also a place for advocacy, so long as the Negro scholar understands the difference. Recognizing the importance of the use of objective data in the passionate advocacy of the rectification of injustice, the Negro can assume this additional role for his own sake and for the sake of the community. . . . [T]he proper choice for the American Negro scholar is to use his knowledge and ingenuity, his resources and talents, to combat the forces that isolate him and his people and, like the true patriot that he is, to contribute to the solution of the problems that all Americans face in common. (as cited in Hill, 1966, pp. 74–76)

Yet as Franklin clearly recognized, meeting the twin responsibilities of scholarship and advocacy was never easy. Maintaining proper emotional distance in one's research and writing, while passionately engaged in the cause of justice, constituted for the Black scholar the "major dilemma."

Fulfilled Promise

After contributing to the outcome in *Brown*, what else did these Rosenwalds achieve? To what extent did they fulfill the promise that had won them fellowships in the first place? Horace Bond, as president of the oldest Black college in the country, was at the height of his career in 1953, though he had further work to undertake after he left that position. Similarly, Vann Woodward, already well established with six books behind him and a chair at Yale in his future, continued a productive career that would lead many to consider him the 20th century's greatest American historian (Faust, 2000).

The other fellows were relatively young, with highly notable accomplishments ahead of them. After leaving the NAACP in 1968, Robert Carter served as a federal judge for the U.S. District Court in New York for over a quarter-century (*Who's Who*, 1999). John A. Davis had a distinguished career at the City College of New York, earning election to the vice presidency of the American Political Science Association and, for his long service as executive director of the American Society of African Culture, recognition from the governments of Senegal and Cameroon (*Who's Who*, 1999). Also pursuing his career at City College, Kenneth Clark became the first African American full professor at that institution, while continuing his human rights advocacy. Labeled "the best-known and most highly regarded Black social scientist in the nation," he was honored by his colleagues by election to the presidency of the American Psychological Association (Kluger, 1975, p. 396). Cofounder of a testing and guidance center for youth in Harlem, Mamie Clark served for many years as its executive director (Sammons, 1990). Mabel Murphy Smythe interrupted her academic career for diplomatic service, first in Syria and Malta, then as U.S. Ambassador to Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea, finally as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs in the Carter administration (Biographical Notes, n.d.). John Hope Franklin went on to hold prestigious appointments at Brooklyn College, the University of Chicago, and Duke University, producing a body of scholarship that brought recognition as the preeminent authority on the African American experience, and election to the

[6]Similarly, Charles S. Johnson believed that scholarly work could empower advocacy and lead to public policy changes (see Robbins, 1996).

This content downloaded from 108.48.156.86 on Tue, 05 Feb 2019 00:45:17 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

presidency of five national scholarly organizations (*Who's Who*, 1999). A more accomplished group of leaders is hard to imagine. These exemplars suggest the Rosenwald fellowships achieved their underlying purpose in spectacular fashion.

Welcome Consequences

In 1948, well before the school segregation cases reached the Supreme Court, the Julius Rosenwald Fund passed out of existence, having expended all its endowment as stipulated by the founder two decades earlier. At its final meeting, as the last assets were being disbursed, the Board of Trustees approved a grant of $7,500 to the NAACP to help with the expenses of its legal work (Belles, 1972, p. 157).[7] In the months that followed, the series of cases leading up to the historic *Brown* decision were litigated by the NAACP—two higher education cases (*McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* and *Sweat v. Painter*) in 1950, the South Carolina, Kansas, Delaware, and District of Columbia cases in 1951, and the Virginia case in 1952.

Before even the first of these cases was heard, Edwin Embree, president of the Fund and its moving spirit for its entire corporate life, made clear his view on the school segregation question. In 1949, he articulated the position soon to be argued by the NAACP and subsequently proclaimed by the U.S. Supreme Court:

> The Negro does not receive educational opportunity equal to White students of the same community in *any* [emphasis in original] separate school system. Recent Supreme Court decisions have ruled that the states must adhere to their own constitutional provisions by giving the same facilities to Negroes as those available to Whites. Past experience, however, proves that this is impossible under a segregated system. Equality of educational opportunity will be fully realized only when segregation is outlawed. (Embree & Waxman, 1949, p. 106)

Thus in multiple ways—by philosophical conviction, by funding critical research, by direct financial support to the NAACP, and perhaps above all, by identifying promising scholars and enabling them to use their talents for societal change—the Rosenwald Fund contributed greatly, albeit indirectly, to the elimination of legally enforced school segregation. The officers of the Fund would have been immensely pleased with this momentous outcome and highly gratified by the realized promise of these Rosenwald fellows.

References

Belles, A. (1972). *The Julius Rosenwald Fund: Efforts in race relations, 1928–1948*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Vanderbilt University.

Bielke, J. R. (1997). The changing emphasis of the Rosenwald Fellowship Program, 1928–1948. *The Journal of Negro Education, 66*(1), 3–15.

Biographical Notes. (n.d). *Register of manuscripts of the Hugh H. Smythe and Mabel M. Smythe Collection*. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

Bond, H. (1932, January). Debate in the Alabama Constitutional Convention of 1901. *The Journal of Negro Education, 1*, 49–59.

Buck, P. (1937). Letter to Raymond Paty. Julius Rosenwald Fund Collection [JRFC]. Box 413, f. 10. Library Special Collections, Fisk University.

Bullock, H. (1970). *A history of Negro education in the South.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Carter, R. L. (1940). Statement of plan of work. JRFC. Box 400, f. 4. Library Special Collections, Fisk University.

[7]This grant brought Fund contributions to the LDEF to a total of $33,500. Though this amount seems small, it represents a bit more than one-third of all the NAACP's litigation costs aimed at school desegregation through the *Brown* decision (Embree & Waxman, 1949, p. 194; Kluger, 1975, p. 780; NAACP Archives, Group II, Section A, Box 623, f. 3).

This content downloaded from 108.48.156.86 on Tue, 05 Feb 2019 00:45:17 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Clark, K. et al. (1951). The effects of segregation and the consequences of desegregation: A social science statement. *Minnesota Law Review, 37*, 427–39.
Clark, K. (Ed.). (1953). Desegregation: An appraisal of the evidence. *The Journal of Social Issues, IV*(4).
Clark, K. (1955). *Prejudice and your child.* Boston: Beacon.
Clark, K. (n.d.) *Papers*. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
Clark, M. (1940). Proposed study. JRFC. Box 402, f. 3. Library Special Collections, Fisk University.
Davis, J. A. (1938). Plan of work. JRFC. Box 406, f. 4. Library Special Collections, Fisk University.
Davis, J. A. (1940). Letter of recommendation. JRFC. Box 400, f. 4. Library Special Collections, Fisk University.
Davis, J. A. (1953, September 9, 1953). Letter to Thurgood Marshall. NAACP Archives. Group II, Sect. B, Box 140. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
Davis, W. A., & Dollard, J. (1940). *Children of bondage: The personality development of Negro youth in the urban South.* Washington, DC: American Council on Education.
Embree, E. (1940). JRFC. Box 375, f. 8. Library Special Collections, Fisk University.
Embree, E., & Waxman J. (1949). *Investment in people: The story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund.* New York: Harper.
Faust, D. (2000, January 14). C. Vann Woodward: Helping to make history. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, p. B7.
Franklin, J. H. (1937). Plan of Work. JRFC. Box 413, f. 10. Library Special Collections, Fisk University.
Franklin, J. H. (1947, October 28). Letter to Edwin Embree. JRFC. Box 412, f. 10. Library Special Collections, Fisk University.
Hill, H. (Ed.). (1966). *Soon, one morning: New writing by American Negroes, 1940–1962.* New York: Knopf.
Janken, K. (1993). *Rayford W. Logan and the dilemma of the African American intellectual.* Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
Johnson, C. S. (1930). *The Negro in American civilization: A study of Negro life and race relations in the light of social research.* New York: Holt.
Kluger, R. (1975). *Simple justice: The history of* Brown v. Board of Education *and Black America's struggle for equality.* New York: Knopf.
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. (1953a). *Brief for appellants in nos. 1, 2, and 4 and for respondents in no. 10 on reargument.* New York: NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. (1953b). List of participants. NAACP Archives. Group II, Box 138, f. 3. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. NAACP Archives, Group II, Section A, Box 623, f.3. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
Robbins, R. (1996). *Sidelines activist: Charles S. Johnson and the struggle for civil rights.* Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press.
Roper, J. (1987). *C. Vann Woodward, Southerner.* Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.
Rosenwald Fund. (1936, November 14). *Minutes of the Trustees' Meeting*. JRFC. Box 77, f. 13. Library Special Collections, Fisk University.
Rosenwald Fund. (1940). Fellowships for 1940. JRFC. Box 386, f. 3. Library Special Collections, Fisk University.
Rosenwald Fund. JRFC. Box 374, f. 5. Library Special Collections, Fisk University.
Sammons, V. (Ed.). (1990). *Blacks in science and medicine.* New York: Hemisphere.
Schlesinger, A. (1937). Letter to Raymond Paty. JRFC. Box 413, f. 10. Library Special Collections, Fisk University.
Smythe, M. (1942a, April 24). Letter to Wm. Haygood. JRFC. Box 448, f. 8. Library Special Collections, Fisk University.
Smythe, M. (1942b, June 16). Letter to Wm. Haygood. JRFC. Box 448, f. 8. Library Special Collections, Fisk University.
Thompson, C. (Ed.). (1935). The courts and the Negro separate school. *The Journal of Negro Education, 4*(3).

This content downloaded from 108.48.156.86 on Tue, 05 Feb 2019 00:45:17 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

Tushnet, M. (1994). *Making civil rights law: Thurgood Marshall and the Supreme Court, 1936–1961*. New York: Oxford University Press.
United States Reports, 347. (1953, October term).
Who's who among African Americans (12th ed.). (1999). New York: Gale.
Williams, R. (1972). *The Bonds: An American family*. New York: Atheneum.
Woodward, C. V. (1951a). *Origins of the New South, 1877–1913*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana University Press.
Woodward, C. V. (1951b). *Reunion and reaction: The compromise of 1877 and the end of reconstruction*. Boston: Little, Brown.
Woodward, C. V. (1986). *Thinking back: The perils of writing history*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana University Press.

AUTHOR

ALFRED PERKINS is a Professor of History at Berea College; al_perkins@berea.edu. His interests include modern imperialism, the French Third Republic, and higher education issues.

This content downloaded from 108.48.156.86 on Tue, 05 Feb 2019 00:45:17 UTC
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms