

Originating in the Clarendon County of South Carolina, this decision is one of five cases combined to form the landmark decision of *Brown v. Board*. These five cases combined challenged the policy under the “separate but equal doctrine” as an infringement on the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. At the District level, the court rendered judgment denying an injunctive relief to abolish the establishment of separate school facilities for black children that were inferior to those provided for white students. The Supreme Court vacated the judgment of the district court and remanded the case for further proceedings.

During trial the NAACP and lead attorney at the time (Thurgood Marshall) provided a plethora of social science evidence to show that facilities, curricula, and opportunities afforded to African American students were substantially inferior to those provided to white students. Not only did the evidence capture the injustice of the “separate, but equal doctrine,” but also provided a clear illustration of how the doctrine psychologically affected and harmed black students. A particularly interesting study used by social scientist Kenneth Clark, called the ‘Doll Study,’ encapsulated how the institution of racism internalized self-hatred in black children. The study included an experiment that revealed African American children’s preference for white dolls rather than a doll identical to themselves. The experiment included black students within segregated and integrated schools. Interestingly, the findings of the study revealed that there was an even stronger preference for a white doll among black students in integrated settings. Even though times have changed, the study has left a resonating effect by allowing similar studies to be conducted which actually reveals the same lingering preferences among African American students today.

This decision was the first of the cases included in *Brown v. Board* (which actually cites the *Clark study*) that shed light on the harmful effects of racism in the Deep South. It is not only recognized as the spearhead of the civil rights movement, but also a contributing force behind the national abolition of racial inequality.

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/US/05/13/doll.study/index.html> (re-creation of study today)

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/brown/brown-brown.html> (library of congress background on case study)