**Black History Month Highlights of Black American Scientists**

Brown vs. the Board of Education – Mamie Phipps Clark PhD Psychologist & her husband Kenneth Clark testified as expert witnesses

# **Landmark Cases: Brown v Board Doll Test (C-SPAN)** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a7sX1cn5aO4>

Mamie Phipps Clark was born in Ark., in 1917 and Kenneth Clark was born in 1914 and raised in Harlem, N.Y. Both obtained their bachelor's and master's degrees from Howard University and Mamie earned her PhD at Columbia. Her husband, Kenneth Clark, partnered with her to extend her thesis research on self-identification in black children. “This work was later developed into the famous doll experiments that exposed internalized racism and the negative effects of segregation for African-American children.” (apa.org citing Butler 2009) The Clarks were influential to the Civil Rights movement and their expertise allowed them to testify as expert witnesses in several school desegregation cases, including Brown vs. Board of Education in 1954. Dr. Clark was interviewed by PBS and told them “we did the study fourteen years before Brown, and the lawyers of the NAACP learned about it and came and asked us if we thought it was relevant to what they were planning to do in terms of the Brown decision cases. And we told them it was up to them to make that decision and we did not do it for litigation. We did it to communicate to our colleagues in psychology the influence of race and color and status on the self-esteem of children.”

“The Supreme Court cited Clark’s 1950 paper in its Brown decision and acknowledged it implicitly in the following passage: “To separate [African-American children] from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone.” Dr. Kenneth Clark was dismayed that the court failed to cite two other conclusions he had reached: that racism was an inherently American institution, and that school segregation inhibited the development of white children, too.”

Butler, S. (2009). Mamie Katherine Phipps Clark (1917–1983). [The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture.](http://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=2938) Retrieved Jan. 25, 2012.

Mamie Phipps Clark, PhD, and Kenneth Clark, PhD. *American Psychological Association*, American Psychological Association, [www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/ethnicity-health/psychologists/clark.aspx](http://www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/ethnicity-health/psychologists/clark.aspx).

“NAACP Legal Defense Fund : Defend, Educate, Empower.” *Brown at 60: The Doll Test | NAACP LDF*, www.naacpldf.org/brown-at-60-the-doll-test.

“This case was the consolidation of four cases arising in separate states relating to the segregation of public schools on the basis of race. In each of the cases, African American minors had been denied admittance to certain public schools based on laws allowing public education to be segregated by race. They argued that such segregation violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The plaintiffs were denied relief based on the precedent set by Plessy v. Ferguson, which established the “separate but equal” doctrine that stated separate facilities for the races was constitutional as long as the facilities were “substantially equal.” In the case arising from Delaware, the Supreme Court of Delaware ruled that the African American students had to be admitted to the white public schools because of their higher quality facilities.”

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1). (n.d.). Oyez. Retrieved February 10, 2018, from https://www.oyez.org/cases/1940-1955/347us483