

Linda Brown Thompson, school desegregation pioneer, dies at age 75

The lifelong AME Church member was at the center of the 1954 Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*.

People in the [April 25, 2018](#) issue



Linda Brown Thompson. Photo courtesy of the family of Linda Brown Thompson.

Linda Brown Thompson, who was at the center of the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case and a lifelong member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, died March 25 at age 75 in Topeka, Kansas.

She advocated for school desegregation and educational reform throughout her life, “lecturing about the history and significance of the civil rights milestone that eventually outlawed segregation in public schools,” her family wrote in her obituary. Her father, Oliver Brown, was the lead plaintiff in the 1954 Supreme Court case,

which was part of a group of cases brought by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund to challenge the “separate but equal” doctrine. Oliver Brown was a pastor at St. Mark’s AME Church in Topeka. Linda Brown Thompson sang in the choir at St. Mark’s and served as the church’s pianist for more than 40 years.

Loretta Moore, her longtime friend, remembers her as “a lady of quiet dignity who responded to the harsh blows that life handed her with strength and determination to persevere. . . . She accepted speaking invitations at local schools and churches as readily as she honored major speaking engagements throughout the world. [Her] legacy has and will continue to impact the education of children for generations.” — [*The Christian Recorder*, official newspaper of the AME Church](#)