

There have been many important changes in higher education over the past fifty years, but none is more important than desegregation of our educational institutions. We would not be addressing issues today such as affirmative action, the future of historically black institutions, or race-restrictive scholarships if this nation had not fought the battle to desegregate its schools, colleges, and universities. The long journey toward desegregation of higher education institutions has taken many tortuous turns, winding its way from complete statutory and constitutional state mandates for racial segregation in education to recognition by all states that the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 stand for equal educational opportunity irrespective of race. This essay focuses on race and the desegregation of our educational institutions from the pre-*Brown* graduate school cases to the recent settlements of the massive, long-term desegregation cases in Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Alabama.