

Melba Pattillo Beals', Warriors Don't Cry

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Melba Pattillo Beals', *Warriors Don't Cry*

In the book *Warriors Don't Cry* by Melba Pattillo Beals, the author describes what her reactions and feelings are to the racial hatred and discrimination she and eight other African-American teenagers received in Little Rock, Arkansas during the desegregation period in 1957. She tells the story of the nine students from the time she turned sixteen years old and began keeping a diary until her final days at Central High School in Little Rock. The story begins by Melba talking about the anger, hatred, and sadness that is brought up upon her first return to Central High for a reunion with her eight other classmates. As she walks through the halls and rooms of the old school, she recalls the horrible acts of violence that were committed by the white students against her and her friends.

In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Brown vs. The Board of Education* that schools needed to integrate and provide equal education for all people and it was unconstitutional for the state to deny certain citizens this opportunity. Although this decision was a landmark case and meant the schools could no longer deny admission to a child based solely on the color of their skin. By 1957, most schools had begun to slowly

integrate their students, but those in the deep south were still trying to fight the decision. One of the most widely known [instances](#) of this happening was at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. It took the school district three years to work out an integration plan. The board members and faculty didn't like the fact that they were going to have to teach a group of students that were looked down upon and seen as "inferior" to white students. However, after much opposition, a plan was finally proposed. The plan called for the integration to happen in three phases. First, during the 1957-1958 school year, the senior high school would be integrated, then after completion at the senior high level, the junior high would be integrated, and the elementary levels would follow in due time. Seventeen students were chosen from hundreds of applicants to be the first black teenagers to begin the integration process. The town went into an uproar. Many acts of violence were committed toward the African-Americans in the city. Racism and segregation seemed to be on the rise. Most black students decid...

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...f and eventually led to complete integration of all ethnic groups in America.

The definition of a warrior is "one who is engaged in or experienced in battle, or in the military life; a soldier; a champion". Melba [Beals](#) proved to be a warrior throughout all of the events that surrounded the integration of Central High School. Although she eventually had to leave town, she and the other eight students showed true bravery and courage when they decided to scale the walls of segregation and end the oppression of the white people in Little Rock. Beals was truly woman who fought hard and kept her faith in route to becoming a "warrior" and eventually a "champion" in the fight for civil rights.

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