



Spottswood W. Robinson III

Born: July 26, 1916

Died: December 27, 1997

Undergraduate Degree: Virginia Union University

Law Degree: Howard University Law School, 1939

Case Argued: *Briggs v. Elliott*, *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*



Immediately after graduating from Howard University School of Law, Spottswood Robinson joined the faculty. He taught until 1947, when he joined the NAACP Legal Defense Fund as an attorney.

In 1951, a group of students from Farmville, Virginia, was striking to obtain equal facilities at their school. When student leaders contacted the NAACP to get help, Oliver Hill and Spottswood Robinson were assigned to the case, and agreed to help them if they would try to integrate the schools, as opposed to obtaining equal facilities. This case, *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*, along with four others would come to the U.S. Supreme Court at the same time and become known as *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Robinson returned to Howard University School of Law to become dean from 1960-1964. He left to become the first African American to be appointed to the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. In 1966, Judge Robinson became the first African American appointed to the U.S. Court of Appeals. He retired from the bench in 1989.

References:

Kluger, Richard. *Simple Justice*. New York: Vintage Books, 2004.