Harry F. Byrd, Sr., as governor, was known for a “Pay As You Go” policy for road improvements, and he modernized Virginia state government. Byrd also led a Massive Resistance Movement against the integration of public schools.

Desegregation and Massive Resistance in Virginia

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1954 (Brown v. Board of Education) that “separate but equal” public schools were unconstitutional. All public schools, including those in Virginia, were ordered to integrate.

Virginia’s government established a policy of Massive Resistance, which fought to “resist” the integration of public schools. Some schools were closed to avoid integration.

Left -> Right: Former Virginia Governor John Battle, Harry F. Byrd, Congressman Bill Tucker

The policy of Massive Resistance failed, and Virginia’s public schools were integrated.

Segregation, Desegregation and Integration

Segregation is keeping people separate from others based on race.

Desegregation is doing away with segregation, people are no longer kept apart because of race.

Integration is the full equality of all races in the use of public facilities.

Arthur R. Ashe, Jr., was the first African American winner of a major men’s tennis singles championship. He was also an author and eloquent spokesperson for social change.