

**TOM HOOPER SEAMAN**  
*TRANSCRIPT of VIDEO PRESENTATION*  
**KANSAS CAPITOL MURAL: BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
November 29, 2016

Good morning!

My name is Tom Hooper Seaman.

Thank you for inviting me here today to present my mural proposal. It's been sometime since I've looked at this design but I've always been passionate about this powerful Landmark Decision because of its impact on our children.

As I studied the design, the thing that jumped out to me were the flowers. Do you see the flowers in the center of the painting? Well, they're not just flowers. They are the State Flowers of the individual States central to the *Brown v. Board* decision. These states came together to make change, creating a beautiful bouquet. I have deliberately placed these flowers on the desk of Charles Houston, the chief strategist for *Brown v. Board of Education*. He gathered together all these great men and women, these brilliant legal minds, these beautiful flowers, to fight against segregation in public schools. Charles Houston sits at his desk and writes the words 14th Amendment. Why the 14th Amendment? Well, that is a point of discussion to teach our children. When that bus load of children comes to the Capitol Building for a school field trip, they are naturally excited and eager to engage. This mural is designed to provoke that discussion.

When those kids are standing in front of this mural right next to the courtroom where it all began, they will look up and *wonder...*

*Teacher, who is that girl with the book standing in front of the class?*

She's reading about the history of *Brown v. Board of Education*. From the Kansas State Capitol all the way to the Supreme Court, all these people came together to end segregation in public schools.

*And why is her shoelace untied?*

She's so involved in the story and thinking about her future; she's not self conscious.

*Who's the funny looking guy in the tree? What is he doing?*

Well that's Jim Crow. He was a white comic who performed in black face. He was a clown that made fun of African Americans. Jim Crow became the symbol of segregation that denied blacks basic human rights. He and his pet crow are squawking at the protesters. Those are the people who marched to end segregation in Kansas.

*What is that photograph on Mr. Houston's desk?*

That is a famous photograph of the plaintiffs that Mr. Houston and his right hand man, Thurgood Marshall, represented in court.

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*But what are all those dates and names in the frame around the picture?*

Well those are all the Kansas cases that came before *Brown v. Board* that set the framework for Charles Houston to build the case.

*But what are those baby dolls doing in front of that building?*

That building is the Monroe Elementary School. It is the National Historic Landmark for *Brown v. Board*. We're going on that field trip next week! And the baby dolls represent what was called the "Doll Test". Psychologists Dr. & Mrs. Kenneth Clark conducted a series of experiments to study the effects of segregation on African American children. They proved they had a feeling of inferiority and low self esteem. The Supreme Court even cited the Doll Test in their decision.

*What is that cloud surrounding Charles Houston? Is that a tornado?*

Yes, that tornado is the artist's concept that represents integration, an unstoppable force of nature that swept the land.

*Oh look...that looks like our classroom and those two boys are shaking hands.*

They're becoming friends. It was Thurgood Marshall, who later became a Supreme Court Justice, said, "The legal system can open doors and sometimes break down walls, but it's up to you and me to build bridges."

After revisiting my design for this mural, I find it stimulating. I am inspired to take it to the next level - to actually paint it. This mural is the story of the people who came together to end segregation in public schools with equal protection under the law so that all children can fulfill their dreams and aspirations. My vision for this project is to not only give you a masterfully painted mural, but to also include an interactive map that explains the historical significance of the people depicted, as well as a time-lapse documentary of the making of the mural.

I'm honored to be considered for this project and look forward to our future collaboration.

Thank you again and have a good day.

Tom Hooper Seaman