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History of Segregation at U.T., to Roy H. Beeler, October 17, 1942

P.J. Kruesi

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October 17, 1942

General Ray M. Beeler,
Nashville, Tennessee

Mr. STATE ex rel. Michael v. Henry B. Wilkes,
Dean of the Law School of the University
of Memphis, et al

Dear General Beeler:

Admirably, as I do, everything that represents your legal opinions, I shall look forward with interest to the receipt of the brief mentioned in your letter of the 15th. It has not yet come to hand, but probably will be in Monday's mail.

It is of little consolation to me here at heart the State's interest in its educational system, and in particular in its University, that the Supreme Court of the United States may 'nullify' and wrong in the Missouri decision. The mere one reflects on the ultimate implications of that decision, the mere disastrous to the economy of the state it becomes.

At the moment the only issue seems to be the admission of negroes to the Law School, but, admittedly, this is only a test case by the plans and purposes of the State. The basic argument will inevitably be used not only as to courses in law economics, but engineering, chemistry, and so forth. Furthermore, the extension of the philosophy (as I see it) laid down in the Missouri case, would indicate that sooner or later the demand will be made that all there are five or more teacher training schools so distributed geographically in the State as to ensure a minimum of travel expense to the citizens of such areas, some either negroes should be admitted to each of those institutions, or the capital and operating expenses of them should be duplicated by like institutions for negroes.

If we were really able to be independent we might ignore the Missouri decision, but we live so largely on Government "subsidy" that there would be an economic weapon available to us which would be compelling.

It is my understanding that the State Department of Education under Commissioner Dugger is diligently at work providing in Nashville for the same educational opportunities, but that this will really forever settle the question, even if and after such facilities are provided, takes a good deal of optimism to believe.

At any event, I appreciate the opportunity to read the argument made by you in the State Supreme Court, and have from acquaintance and experience that I am well able to compliment you in advance of the reading.

With regards, and esteem,

P.S. D cc Dr. Hoskins

Truly yours, J.F. Thorne