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

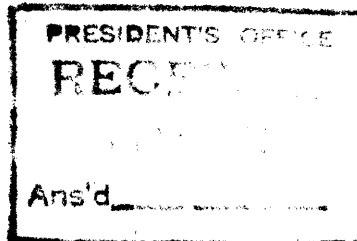
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October 17, 1942

General Roy H. Beeler,
Nashville, Tennessee

RE: STATE ex rel Michael v. Henry B. Witham,
Dean of the Law School of the University
of Memphis, et al

Dear General Beeler:

Admiring, 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 14th. It has not yet come to hand, but probably will be in Monday's mail.

It is of little consolation to us who have at heart the State's interest in its educational system, and in particular in its University, that the Supreme Court of the United States was "all wet" and wrong in the Missouri decision. The more one reflects on the ultimate implications of that decision, the more 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 pinkies and reformers of the South. The same arguments will inevitably be used not only as to courses in home 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 since there are five or more teacher training schools so distributed geographically in the State as to cause a minimum of travel expense to the citizens of such areas, then either negroes should be admitted to each of these 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 "pap" that there would be an economic weapon available against us which would be compelling.

It is my understanding that the State Department of Education under Commissioner Duggan is diligently at work providing at 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 all events, I appreciate the opportunity to read the argument made by you in the State Supreme Court, and know from acquaintance and experience that I am well able to compliment you in advance of the reading.

With regards, and esteem,

PJK D cc Dr. Hoskins

Truly yours,

P. J. Keenan