

Arlington Public Library Launches “Project DAPS”

Telling the Story of Desegregation in Arlington Public Schools

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- *Newly curated digital collection of desegregation in Arlington Public Schools contains thousands of records*
- Projectdaps.org to be launched Feb. 25
- Call for community donations and oral histories

The story of public school desegregation in Virginia is now richly documented and made accessible by the County that led the way.

On Feb. 25, Arlington Public Library launches a unique online exhibition and searchable database – built from thousands of photos, documents and recordings – surrounding the legal and moral battles that culminated with four courageous African American students taking their seats on Feb. 2, 1959 at Arlington’s Stratford Junior High School.

“Project DAPS” (Desegregation of Arlington Public Schools) is culled from the holdings of the Library’s Community Archives in the Center for Local History (CLH) at Central Library. Many items were recently digitized for the first time. The project explores the historic narrative starting with early integration efforts amid Arlington’s rapid growth of the 1940s.

In 2016, the Stratford school property was declared a local historic district. Library Director Diane Kresh says the timing was perfect for creating a “complementary and comprehensive digital collection to tell the story of this signal milestone in our rich community history.”

Because there are always more layers of history to find and examine, the CLH continually seeks community donations and oral histories, particularly as they relate to desegregation following the historic day at Stratford. Contact the CLH at 703-228-5966 or localhistory@arlingtonva.us.

This digital access project was completed using new FY2017 funding in the Department of Libraries budget dedicated to increasing public access to government records and archival materials.

The Center for Local History at Arlington Public Library is committed to collecting, preserving, and sharing the history of Arlington County. To learn more about the Center for Local History, visit library.arlingtonva.us/center-for-local-history.

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The Arlington Public Library provides access to information, creates connections among people and promotes reading and culture.

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