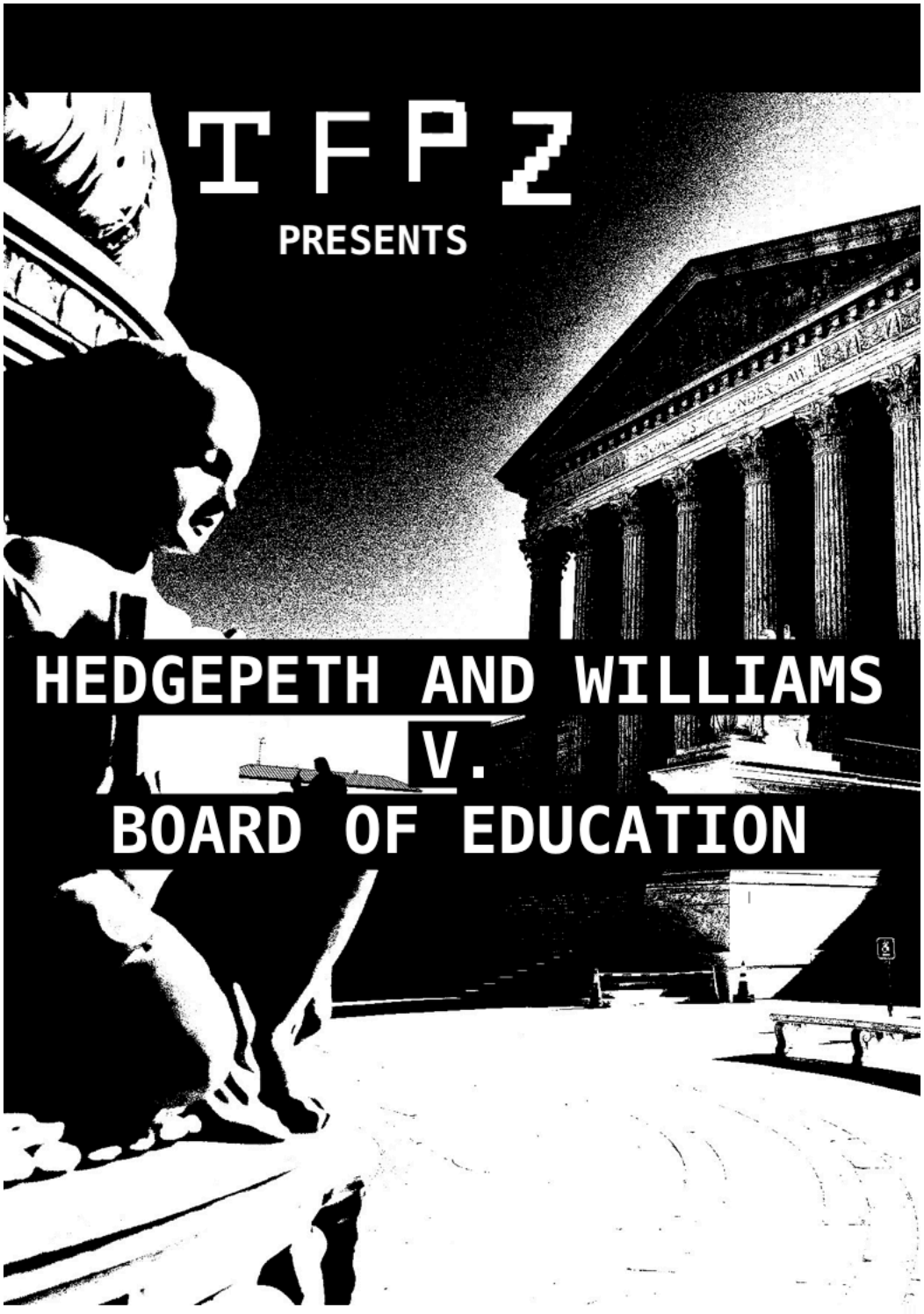


ISSUE NUMBER 4

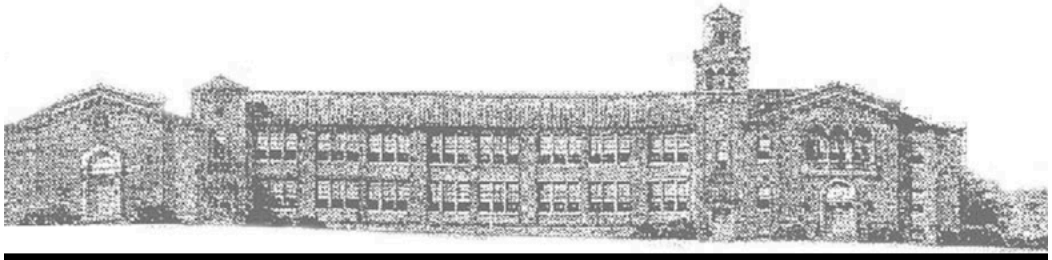
SEPTEMBER 1943

JANET HEDGEPETH AND LEON WILLIAMS WERE TURNED AWAY FROM THEIR LOCAL JUNIOR HIGH-SCHOOL DUE TO THE COLOR OF THEIR SKIN

EVEN THOUGH SCHOOL PLACEMENT WAS DETERMINED BY LOCATION AND DISTANCE, THE SCHOOL ONLY ALLOWED WHITE STUDENTS TO ENTER

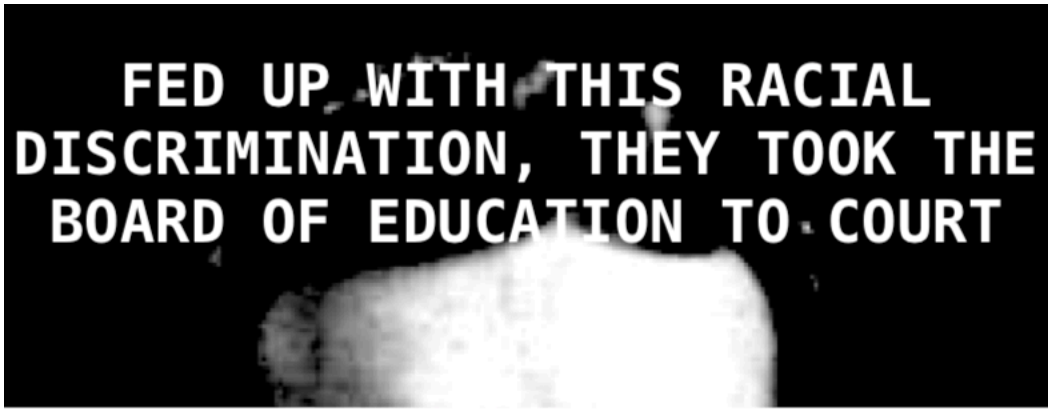
THE ONLY SCHOOL AVAILABLE FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS IN TRENTON WAS LINCOLN SCHOOL, ALSO KNOWN AS JUNIOR #5

JUNIORS #1-4 ONLY PERMITTED WHITE STUDENTS REGARDLESS OF RESIDENCY



GLADYS HEDGEPETH AND BERLINE WILLIAMS DID NOT WANT THEIR YOUNG CHILDREN ENDURING THE HARSH AND UNNECESSARY JOURNEY TO AND FROM SCHOOL EACH DAY

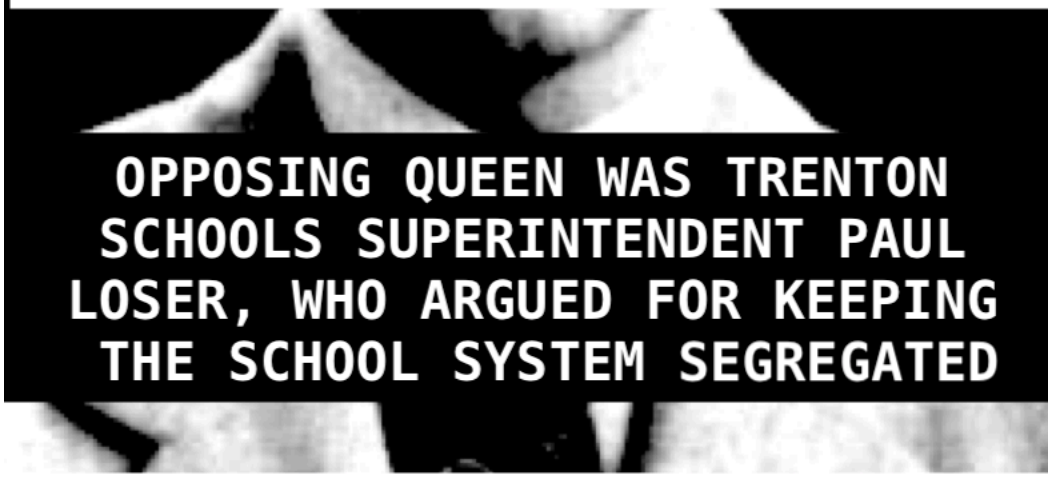
NOT WHEN A SCHOOL EXISTED RIGHT IN THE WILBUR NEIGHBORHOOD WHERE THEY LIVED



FED UP WITH THIS RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, THEY TOOK THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO COURT

ROBERT QUEEN, AN AFRICAN–AMERICAN LAWYER, WAS ASSIGNED TO DEFEND THE CASE BY THE NAACP

THE CASE WENT ALL THE WAY TO THE SUPREME COURT



OPPOSING QUEEN WAS TRENTON SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT PAUL LOSER, WHO ARGUED FOR KEEPING THE SCHOOL SYSTEM SEGREGATED

IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THIS CASE WAS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE SUPREME COURT’S DECISION IN THE PLESSY V. FERGUSON CASE OF 1896 (ALMOST 50 YEARS EARLIER)

JANUARY 1944

ON JANUARY 31, THE COURT RULED IN FAVOR OF HEDGEPETH AND WILLIAMS, DETERMINING THAT THE BOARD OF EDUCATION'S UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION WAS IN DIRECT VIOLATION OF NJ STATUTE 18:14–2

THE COURT DECREED THAT INTEGRATION OF ALL NEW JERSEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS WAS TO BEGIN IMMEDIATELY, AS WELL AS LAWS AND POLICIES TO ENSURE THAT EVERY STUDENT WAS TREATED FAIRLY, REGARDLESS OF RACE

(NEVER UNDERESTIMATE A MOTHER'S LOVE)

IN THE 1950S, FUTURE SUPREME COURT JUSTICE THURGOOD MARSHALL, ACTING AS CHIEF COUNSEL FOR THE NAACP, INVOKED HEDGEPETH AND WILLIAMS V. THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AS AN EARLIER EXAMPLE OF SCHOOL INTEGRATION WHILE WORKING ON THE LANDMARK SUPREME COURT CASE BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION

TODAY, THE LEGACY OF GLADYS HEDGEPETH AND BERLINE WILLIAMS LIVES ON IN THE FORM OF HEDGEPETH–WILLIAMS MIDDLE SCHOOL

THE SCHOOL STANDS AS A REMINDER OF WHAT LOVE, DETERMINATION AND A DESIRE FOR JUSTICE CAN ACCOMPLISH

THANKS FOR READING!

TFPZ
(TRENTON FREE PUBLIC ZINE)
IS THE LIBRARY'S
FLAGSHIP ZINE SERIES

FOR MORE INFO, VISIT
WWW.TRENTONLIB.ORG/ZINE-LIBRARY
OR CALL (609)392-7188

SOURCE: RICHARDS, CHARLENE. "HEDGEPETH AND WILLIAMS V. BOARD OF EDUCATION: A TURNING POINT IN THE ADVANCEMENT OF EQUALITY." TRENTON DAILY. JULY 6, 2020. WWW.TRENTONDAILY.COM