



In 1964, in the city of Cleveland, people were very concerned about segregated schools.

Integration was not working since African-American students attending white schools (such as Memorial Elementary) could not:

- Eat in the cafeteria (with white students);
- Attend phys-ed classes (with white students); and
- Could only use restroom facilities once each day (when white students were otherwise occupied).

On the 30th of January, 1964, people who were against integrating Memorial Elementary - located in the “Little Italy” section of Cleveland - made clear they did not want African-American children to attend the school.



The protest turned into a riot which then became violent when whites attacked blacks in the street.



When officials proposed to fix the problem by building a new school for African-American students only, to be named "Stephen Howe Elementary School," a local pastor led the protest against its construction.

Reverend Bruce Klunder - a white 27-year-old father of two - laid down behind a bulldozer which was on the new-school site. Other protestors positioned themselves in front of the dozer.



Not realizing anyone was behind him - and to avoid the people in front of him - the equipment operator backed-up his machine.

He ran over the pastor who was photographed just moments before the horrific event (on April 7, 1964). [Rev. Klunder died](#) from his crushing injuries.

Despite Klunder's death, construction workers at the school site resumed their work just a few hours after the bulldozer accident.

More than 1,500 people attended Klunder's memorial service. The photo, at the top of the page, depicts some of the individuals who attended and who continued the protest against building another all-black school.

Credits:

All images, depicted above, online via Cleveland State Library Special Collections.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Civil-Rights-and-a-Bulldozer-Disaster>

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## Media Stream



### 1964 Protests at Memorial Elementary

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### 1964 - Bruce Klunder Protests

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### 1964 - Cleveland Riots against Integration

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### Civil Rights and a Bulldozer Disaster

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