

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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THE DELAWARE COURT OF CHANCERY ANNOUNCES
3RD ANNUAL STUDENT LEGAL HISTORY ART CONTEST

The Delaware Court of Chancery is proud to announce its third annual Legal History Art Contest, open to Delaware students in grades 7-12, to honor the 1952 Court of Chancery rulings in *Belton v. Gebhart* and *Bulah v. Gebhart* ordering the desegregation of two Delaware public schools. In 1954, the United States Supreme Court affirmed these rulings in the landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education*.

The art contest, which is being conducted in partnership with the Court of Chancery Historical Society, invites students to submit works representing these historic cases and their impact. Student participants are asked to create art depicting their impressions of these important court cases, including people or places that were featured in the decision including litigants, judges, lawyers, or locations such as the schools or towns. Participating students can submit their art digitally by email. All submissions must be original artwork by the student and e-mail submissions must include the student's full name, email, phone number, grade, title of artwork (optional) and how the artwork addresses the theme. **All submissions must be received by April 25, 2025.**

Winners of the contest will receive \$500 for first place, \$300 for second place, and \$200 for third place. In addition, the winning students and their families will be invited to attend a reception and award ceremony.

Early submissions are encouraged and full details, including the form needed to submit for the contest, can be found on the court's website at <https://courts.delaware.gov/chancery/art-competition.aspx>. See below for more details on *Belton v. Gebhart* and *Bulah v. Gebhart*.

Amidst the backdrop of segregated Wilmington in the early 1950's, African American parents challenged state-enforced segregation by fighting to have their children be able to attend their local white schools. In *Belton v. Gebhart*, high school student Ethel Louise Belton was forced to travel two hours daily to a school with inferior and unequal academic offerings. In *Bulah v. Gebhart*, Shirley Bulah was not allowed to ride the bus that passed by her house with the white children every day and was prevented from attending her local public school due to her race. Both Belton and Bulah were represented by Louis L. Redding, Esquire, Delaware's first African American attorney.

On April 1, 1952, then Chancellor Collins J. Seitz (father of current Delaware Supreme Court Chief Justice Collins J. Seitz, Jr.) of the Delaware Court of Chancery delivered the opinion in the action consolidating *Belton* and *Bulah*, concluding that segregation caused African American children, as a class, to receive "educational opportunities which are substantially inferior to those available to white children otherwise similarly situated." Chancellor Seitz also noted: "The application of Constitutional principles is often distasteful to some citizens, but that is one reason

for Constitutional guarantees. The principles override transitory passions.” Two weeks later, he ordered the desegregation of the two schools at issue in the case, Claymont High School and Hockessin School No. 29. *Belton* and *Bulah* were later part of the consolidated litigation leading to the 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* where the United States Supreme Court declared the “separate but equal” doctrine unconstitutional.