WIBW coverage on 2/28/25 of Michael Young’s oral history of the Brown v.Board Mural

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TOPEKA, Kan. (WIBW) - On May 17, 1954, the landmark Brown v. Board of Education ruling brought an end to legal segregation in public schools, granting black students everywhere the right to equal schooling.

“Brown V Board is not just Kansas history. It’s a defining moment that reshaped our nation and reaffirmed our state’s legacy as a leader in the fight for equality,” Gov. Laura Kelly said.

As Black History Month comes to a close, Kansas leaders celebrated this decision by taking a deeper look at a local piece of art that brings this historical case to life.

The third floor of the Kansas State Capitol is home to a 22’x8′ mural that depicts the Kansas fight to desegregate public schools, from the movement’s humble beginnings to its eventual victory.

Michael Young, a lifelong artist and Kansas native, created this piece for the statehouse in 2018 after winning a nationwide competition. He says it tells an emotional story of struggle and dedication.

“It’s a good feeling mural,” Young said. “It’s got the hardships, it’s got the anguish over to the left and the demonstrations, that sort of thing. As you move from the left to the right you see the positive effects from it, like graduating from college and getting professional jobs.”

He spoke about his process in creating the mural and its message for the Kansas Oral History Project, a nonprofit organization that documents and reflects in policy-shaping moments like the Brown v. Board ruling.

“It’s to make sure that how people view the experience they had making public policy is available for everyone,” Ramon Powers, former Executive Director of the Kansas Historical Society, said.

Many Kansas leaders spoke about the importance of Young’s mural and the freedom that it celebrates, including Gov. Laura Kelly, who was reminded of Kansas' legacy in the fight for equality.

“His work does more than just depict history.” Gov. Kelly said. “It educates and challenges us to reflect on our progress and the work that remains.”

She said the Kansas Oral History Project helps Kansans honor and remember this history by providing a database of information and testimony about policies that have defined Kansas history.

To learn more about the mural and Michael Young, you can access his entire interview at [ksoralhistory.org](https://ksoralhistory.org/).

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