

Abigayle Lista (Kid Interviewer): How did you feel when your parents told you that you would be going to an all white school?

Ruby Bridges: Actually, my parents didn't tell me that. The only thing that my parents said to me about attending a different school is that I was going to be going to a new school, and that I should behave myself.

Abigayle Lista (Kid Interviewer): You must have been afraid as you walked to school through a mob of angry people shouting at you. Were you aware of the danger? How did you overcome your fear?

Ruby Bridges: I was never really afraid because I wasn't quite sure what was going on at the time. It seemed like Mardi Gras, because in New Orleans I'm accustomed to Mardi Gras. So, I wasn't afraid for a very long time.

Abigayle Lista (Kid Interviewer): What was it like to be the only African- American child in the all White school?

Ruby Bridges: What I do remember in that first year is that it was very lonely. I didn't have any friends and I wasn't allowed to go to the cafeteria or the playground. So, what bothered me the most was the loneliness everyday.

Abigayle Lista (Kid Interviewer): How did your first grade teacher Mrs. Henry touch your life?

Ruby Bridges: Mrs. Henry had a huge impact on my life. Mrs. Henry became my friend, so she wasn't just my teacher, she was my only friend in school. It was just her and I, and she made school fun, so she really made a huge impression on me.

Abigayle Lista (Kid Interviewer): When you visit schools today, what strikes you as different from when you were a kid?

Ruby Bridges: My second year was different from my first year at school, because kids were together, black and white. Today, I see many schools that are diverse and mixed, and I think that's the way schools should be. I don't think that racism has a place in the hearts and minds

of our children. I don't think this is the case across the country, there are schools that are segregated, and I think that's unfortunate.

Abigayle Lista (Kid Interviewer): What impact do you feel you had on the desegregation of schools?

Ruby Bridges: I truly changed the face of education in our country, because up until that day, when I entered school, the laws kept us segregated. Every child has the opportunity to now choose their own school, and they have the opportunity to be with people who look different from them. It opens opportunities for children to make friends with other children who are different from them.

Abigayle Lista (Kid Interviewer): It's been 50 years now, when you look back, what emotions come up for you?

Ruby Bridges: I still think there is so much work to be done. The mere fact that we have an African American president, we've come a long way from that day. Still, racism is alive and well, which is so unfortunate for respect for all of us but especially for young people because I think that racism is something that is passed on to kids. I don't think it really matters to kids, especially around six years old, like I was, what their friends look like.

Abigayle Lista (Kid Interviewer): What you did affected every person in this country. What kind of impact has the whole experience had on your life personally?

Ruby Bridges: I think it's changed me into a person that isn't prejudiced. It's inspired me to want to continue to make a difference in this country. I think that racism is ugly and so unfair, and I believe that we all need one another. If we met again in the future, and I needed help, I would hope that you would help me, and I think that has more to do with who we are on the inside, and less of how we look on the outside. That is the message I want to pass on to kids.

Abigayle Lista (Kid Interviewer): What do you want kids today to learn from your experience of 50 years ago?

Ruby Bridges: I hope that they understand my story and what I went through and why. I think once they understand that and relate it to their own lives, hopefully it will help us move one step closer to ridding our country of racism.