

## Who Was Harriet Elizabeth Brown?

Posted by [Zach Hill](#) On 02/20/2021

**CALVERT COUNTY, Md.** -- Do you know the history behind the namesake of the Harriet E. Brown Community Center?

Harriet Elizabeth Brown (1907-2009) was an educator in Calvert County Public Schools for many years. In the late 1930s, after teaching for several years, Brown became aware of pay discrepancies between Black and white teachers and administrators in the county school system.

In 1937, represented by future supreme court justice, then attorney for the NAACP, Thurgood Marshall, Brown sued the Calvert County Board of Education. She cited the pay discrepancy as a violation of the 14th amendment that granted equal legal and civil rights to all African Americans. Brown's case was successfully settled.

For the upcoming school year, the school board agreed "all teachers regularly employed by said Board of Education, having equal professional qualifications and doing equivalent work shall be paid according to a uniform minimum salary scale."

Her case set a precedent for equal pay and the impact was felt not only in Maryland, but also across the country. Brown continued working in the Calvert County school system for over 30 years, moving from her role as a teacher to principal. She touched the lives of countless children and her efforts for equality helped shape history.

Brown is recognized as member of the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame.

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