

Ronald Johnson: Oklahoma's First Black State Trooper

Objective: Students will learn about Oklahoma's first Black State Trooper from a newspaper published in the event of his death. They will recognize discrimination tactics used against Ronald Johnson and compare the culture in Oklahoma today.

State Standards:

PS.7.2 Explain how bias, discrimination and use of stereotypes influence behavior regarding gender, race, sexual orientation and ethnicity as demonstrated in the studies of the Brown Eyed/Blue Eyed Experiment and the Clark Doll Experiment.

USH.9.3 Examine the ongoing issues to be addressed by the Donald Trump and subsequent administrations, including taxation, immigration, employment, climate change, race relations, religious discrimination and bigotry, civic engagement, and perceived biases in the media.

4.A.4-5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining the text explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

4.A.9-12.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, evaluating features such as author, date, and origin of information.

Overview: Students will use newspaper articles to read and comprehend the story of Oklahoma's first Black Highway Patrolman, Ronald Johnson. Ronald Johnson was from Claremore, OK and graduated from Lincoln High School, Claremore's segregated school prior to integration.

Required Materials:

- Worksheet
- Newspaper article

Claremore Progress, November 20, 2011

Written after his death, this article tells the story of Johnson's life and his determination to work in law enforcement despite discrimination from the Oklahoma Highway Patrol office.

Vocabulary:

- Secondary Source
- Discrimination
- Moral imperative

Further Reading: Other articles about Ronald Johnson and others from our Black History collection can be found in our virtual archives on our website. Objects once belonging to Ronald Johnson are on display in our museum.

A True Pioneer: Johnson served with integrity



Read the article by Larry Larkin published in the Claremore Progress on November 20, 2011. Use the article to answer the following questions.

Is this article a primary or secondary source of information? _____

Who is the subject of this article? _____

Why was Johnson's initial application "officially" rejected by the Oklahoma Highway Patrol Academy? Describe how and why this tactic was used to discriminate against Johnson.

How did Johnson respond to being turned down by the Oklahoma Highway Patrol Academy in 1967?

Moral imperative - A strongly felt principle that compels that person to act

"When Lt. Johnson became a highway patrolman, there was still a lot of civil unrest in our nation... The civil rights movement was in full swing, and many people were still having trouble with the moral imperative of equality"- Chief Colonel Kerry Pettingill. It has been over 50 years since the events described in this article. Do you think that Americans are still struggling with the "moral imperative of equality"? Why or why not?
