

## Kansas case opened doors for Little Rock Nine

Without a landmark school desegregation case from Kansas paving their way, nine African-American students in Little Rock, Ark., including Minnijean Brown Trickey, may never have walked into Central High School in 1957. That's the analysis of Diane L. Good, an education specialist with the Kansas State Historical Society.

Good's 2004 book, "*Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone*," explains the history of segregation in the United States, and cases that tested the law allowing separate but equal treatment in schools.

Minnijean Brown Trickey will present the next Bonner and Bonner Diversity Lecture Series address Wednesday, Sept. 12 at Emporia State University. Her speech, "Return to Little Rock," will be presented at 7 p.m. in Albert Taylor Hall in Plumb Hall on the ESU campus.

"These were the students who put their beliefs into well-planned action," Good said of Minnijean Brown Trickey and her classmates, the group which became known as the "Little Rock Nine." She said the nine students forced Americans to see that equality is about people, and that it starts with children.

The students put a face on the fight for equality. "Those students' faces became very well known to Americans as the faces of determination. Theirs were faces of conviction. Theirs were faces of passion," said Good, who earned a master's degree in library science from Emporia State University in 1993.

This conviction and passion was expressed in a climate of slowly changing attitudes toward racial tolerance initiated by the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision.

"Of course there is a Kansas strong connection to the civil rights movement because of the *Brown* case," said Good. "Ms. Brown Trickey and her classmates likely wouldn't have been attending the Little Rock Central High School at that time had the *Brown* case not happened when it did."

"Additionally, Kansan Dwight Eisenhower was president at the time of the 'Little Rock Nine' and he took action directly related to that situation in Little Rock," Good noted.

In addition to her work at the state historical society, Good also teaches anthropology and sociology courses at Washburn University in Topeka.