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CIVIL WAR TO CIVIL RIGHTS: NEWTON THOMAS (EDUCATOR)



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HORSE CAVE — This graduation hood belonged to Newton Thomas, one of the first non-white students to receive a Master's Degree from the University of Kentucky. He earned his degree in 1955 by attending summer sessions.

Thomas was a teacher and then principal of Horse Cave High School for 20 years. He also worked for the State Department of Education as both assistant director and director of equal education.

Thomas retired from this post in 1977. His accomplishments were possible because of a federal lawsuit filed in 1948 by Lyman T. Johnson, which challenged the state's Day Law. Johnson won his suit, setting the stage for other challenges to educational discrimination, including the 1954 *Brown v. the Board of Education* decision. Thomas' persistence helped usher in a new chapter for the University of Kentucky, as the school became a better representative of Kentucky's diversity.

The Kentucky Historical Society (KHS) links Kentuckians with their past via archival collections that document people from every walk of life, reaching back to 1509. Letters, diaries, oral histories and photographs, as well as the first and second Kentucky Constitutions, are included. Find these and other KHS collections online at khscatalog.kyvl.org

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