

## **Student Tom Lee**

Born in 1947, I started attending Arcola Elementary in 1952. I attended the all white Arcola Elementary from the 1st through the 7th grade. In 1960, I started attending Leesburg's Loudoun County High School (LCHS) in the 8th grade. Back then, we simply called it 'County'. I graduated from 'County' in 1965. I lived about 150 yards from Arcola Elementary, so I had a fairly easy walk to school through the 7th grade. I rode a Loudoun County school bus with other white students to LCHS when I was in the 8th and 9th grade. It was a 17 mile trip from Arcola to Leesburg. First we used route 621 (Evergreen Mill Road) in 1960 and then switched to route 659 (Belmont Ridge Road) in 1961. Those roads were paved then, with the exception of about 1 mile of gravel on 621. The trip on 659 (Belmont Ridge Road) included a stop at Ashburn Elementary where 4 or 5 younger students would be dropped off in the morning and picked up in the afternoon. The bus was approximately 75% full when we arrived at 'County'. Our bus driver was one of the high school history teachers. The bus was well maintained and we never got stuck in mud or snow, nor suffered any mechanical breakdowns during those two years. In 1962 (my sophomore year), I was able to ride to 'County' with a friend who had his driver's license. I had my driver's license by the end of my sophomore year, so I drove to high school my Junior and Senior year. At first, 'County' was all white. It integrated around the time I was a Junior with 7 'hand-picked' students from the all Black Douglass High School in Leesburg. I played several sports in high school and the buses we used for our 'away' games carried Black and white teammates. The integration of Black students at 'County' went relatively easy, as I saw it. We certainly didn't have some of the problems other counties in the state (e.g. Warren or Prince Edward) had. To this day, I remain in touch with some of my former Black teammates.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> From December 1, 2020 interview with former LCPS Student Tom Lee conducted by Nathan Bailey