

Title: Morgan v. Commonwealth of Virginia

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Source: *Encyclopedia of Civil Rights in America*. Ed. David Bradley and Shelley Fisher Fishkin. Vol. 2. Armonk, NY: Sharpe Reference, 1998. p612.

Document Type: Topic overview

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Morgan v. Commonwealth of Virginia

1946: U.S. SUPREME COURT decision rejecting a Virginia law that maintained racial SEGREGATION on interstate bus travel.

In 1942 Irene Morgan, an AFRICAN AMERICAN traveling from Baltimore to Virginia, refused to surrender her Greyhound bus seat to a white couple and was arrested and convicted under a Virginia law requiring all bus passengers to "separate without discrimination" so that the same seats would never be occupied by "persons of different races at the same time." The Virginia NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE (NAACP) argued before Virginia's supreme court of appeals that because the law applied only to *intrastate* travel, it could not apply to Morgan, who was traveling between states. After the Virginia court rejected the NAACP request, the association's lawyers quickly appealed Morgan's case to the U.S. Supreme Court; it was the first segregated transportation case that the NAACP brought to the nation's highest court. In a 7-1 vote, the Supreme Court struck down the Virginia segregation law in 1946.

—S. Jonathan Bass

Source Citation

Bass, S. Jonathan. "Morgan v. Commonwealth of Virginia." *Encyclopedia of Civil Rights in America*. Ed. David Bradley and Shelley Fisher Fishkin. Vol. 2. Armonk, NY: Sharpe Reference, 1998. 612. *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Web. 24 Aug. 2010.

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Gale Document Number: GALE|CX3459600444