



Student Name:

Class Period:

Date:

Meet the Originals

Texas Originals is a radio series about people who made an impact on Texas. You can hear it online and on radio stations around the state. Read or listen to the episode on Heman Marion Sweatt. Then, answer questions about it.

Heman Marion Sweatt 1912–1982

When Heman Sweatt, a Black postal employee, applied to The University of Texas School of Law in 1946, officials rejected him because of his race. But Sweatt was not deterred. In fact, he had already volunteered to serve as the NAACP's plaintiff in a suit to desegregate the law school. His qualifications included not only a college degree but also the courage and determination to endure four years of trials and the inevitable threats and vandalism.

Sweatt's upbringing prepared him for the challenge. His father, a charter member of Houston's NAACP branch, had set an example of social activism for his children. Heman encountered another powerful influence at Wiley College, where the charismatic English professor Melvin Tolson exhorted students to challenge discrimination. Sweatt's attorney, Thurgood Marshall, also inspired confidence, for he had already argued civil rights cases before the Supreme Court on behalf of the NAACP.

To keep Sweatt and other Black students out of The University of Texas, state officials built what would become Texas Southern University, but the Supreme Court's unanimous decision in *Sweatt v. Painter* opened UT's law school to African Americans and established an important precedent for *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Sweatt attended but did not finish law school. He later earned a master's degree in Atlanta, where he had a successful career with the Urban League.

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on Heman Marion Sweatt. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. Name the three people the episode includes as inspiring Heman Marion Sweatt in his fight against segregated law schools.
2. The victory in Sweatt's case led to what other important decision related to school desegregation?

Going Further: Write or discuss your answer to the question below, supporting your answer with evidence from the episode or additional information you have learned in class.

3. **Creating Connections.** Based on what you have learned in class, how did Sweatt win his case?