

## *The Little Rock Nine's Historic Battle for School Integration in Arkansas*



Despite the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, resistance to desegregation was fierce in many parts of the country.

On September 4, 1957, nine African American students—known as the Little Rock Nine—attempted to attend Central High School for the first time. However, they were met with hostility. The night before, Governor Orval Faubus had ordered the Arkansas National Guard to block the students from entering.

Sixteen days later, a federal judge ordered the National Guard to step down. On September 23, the Little Rock Nine tried again to enter, but an angry mob gathered outside. Though they were escorted by police through a side door, the situation became so dangerous that school officials sent the students home after just three hours of classes.

But September 25, 1957, marked a turning point. After a plea from Little Rock's mayor, Woodrow Mann, President Dwight D. Eisenhower intervened, federalizing the National Guard and sending in U.S. Army troops. With soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division guarding them, the Little Rock Nine were finally able to attend school safely and begin regular classes at Central High. This courageous act by the students and the federal government's support became a pivotal moment in the Civil Rights Movement, symbolizing the fight for equality and justice.

