

Peggy Taylor Lewis

Class of 1956

Only two days after the 1954 landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, the Fayetteville School Board voted to integrate the Fayetteville High School.

Peggy Taylor was one of seven African American students, two juniors and five sophomores, who attended FHS in the fall of 1954. In 1956, Peggy and classmate Preston Lackey were the first African American students to graduate from Fayetteville High School. During this historic time in Arkansas and the United States, Peggy was an unsung pioneer among her classmates.

Peggy attended Philander Smith College in Little Rock and earned a degree in early education from Westark College in Ft. Smith. In 1966, she began a career at Head Start in Van Buren and retired as Director.

Two Fayetteville graduates have narrated Peggy's story of integration: Charles Y. Alison (FHS Class of 1976) in *A Brief History of Fayetteville Arkansas* and Julianne Lewis (FHS Class of 1984) in *Civil Obedience: An Oral History of School Desegregation in Fayetteville, Arkansas, 1954-1965*.

Peggy and her late husband Herbert C. Lewis, have two boys and a girl: Denise Ann Peter, Inge Lewis, and Danny Lewis and three grandsons.