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PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Legal Defense and Educational Fund

PRESS RELEASE

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LEHMAN FAMILY AIDS INTEGRATION
VIA NAACP LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

NEW YORK, N.Y.--The family of the late Senator Herbert H. Lehman has started a drive to gain integrated educations for more Negro youth, it was announced here last week by Jack Greenberg of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund.

Director-Counsel Greenberg said that the initial grant of \$60,000 will be administered by the Fund under the direction of Dr. John W. Davis, former president of West Virginia State College and Director of the Department of Teacher Information and Security of the Fund.

The Lehman Education Fund seeks to promote good-will and understanding through education by providing scholarships and financial assistance to students to enter desegregated schools, colleges and universities.

It seeks also to inform Negro parents of opportunities for their children to attend newly desegregated elementary and high schools.

The program, after a brief experimental phase, has just commenced functioning on the elementary and secondary levels. The Legal Defense Fund is about to launch the higher education phase for the forthcoming school year, Mr. Greenberg pointed out.

Miss Betty Stevens, southern school coordinator, joined the Fund staff in February of this year.

She visits southern Negro communities which request her services through local civil rights organizations or through the 120 cooperating attorneys of the Legal Defense Fund.

Her job is one of community organization. She informs Negro families of their right to attend schools desegregated by court actions won by the Fund.

She publicizes enrollment dates, assists in filling out application forms, helps allay fears that parents may have that their child will be the only Negro child in a newly desegregated school.

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June 5, 1964

Miss Stevens' task is made difficult by the fact that the usual means of communication--radio, TV and press--are invariably denied.

Miss Stevens works through church and community groups...organizes door-to-door teams...makes mailings...and arranges for sessions to explain the mechanics of school application and transfer.

These procedures stress to Negro parents of elementary and secondary school youngsters the value of nonsegregated education. She attempts to show

*Negro parents how their children are being shortchanged as matriculants in inferior and segregated schools,

*how segregation curtails the Negro child's motivation to study and learn,

*how Negro parents can enroll or transfer their children to previously all-white schools.

In short, this program seeks to fill the gap between court edict and the reality of follow-through in the daily lives of citizens.

To date, Miss Stevens has conducted campaigns in the states of Georgia, Tennessee, Florida, Virginia and Alabama.

The dramatic results of Miss Stevens' work document, Mr. Greenberg said, the willingness of Negro citizens to take advantage of desegregation decisions if they are properly informed how to do so and know their children will not be isolated as lone Negro students in formerly all-white schools.

She signed up 80 youngsters in Albany, Ga. in a single week; 50 in Jackson, Tenn. in two weeks; and 100 in Richmond, Va. in two weeks. She has also launched campaigns in Tampa, Fla., Lynchburg, Va. and Huntsville, Ala.

All these children will enter their new schools this September.

The Lehman Fund will also allow the Defense Fund to work on a college level, by providing scholarships and financial assistance to make possible a flow of Negro and white students into desegregated colleges and universities.

This phase of the program is still in formation.

The Fund will shortly have two additional southern school coordinators, Mr. Greenberg added. Judging by the response received thus far there is a vast need for this service, which will be expanded as rapidly as funds allow.