



## **Transcript for SC Governor Robert McNair**

### **Voice: Governor Richard Riley:**

It is hard for us in words to describe the tenseness of the situation, but the state of South Carolina was lucky to have such a fair-minded careful leader as Bob McNair during those difficult times.

I was in the senate then, and know very well how tough it was. Not long after that of course, when we got into the Greenville integration suit. We had a 30 day order on Greenville to integrate all of the schools. And we all talked about all deliberate speed it was more deliberate than it was speed. And, but I remember a hundred or so vehicles came from Greenville, windows down, people screaming and hollering for the governor to come out. He called me. We had a long conversation. He said, "You know, it's the end of the courts and we're going to comply with the court order" and I said "that is the thing to do, I agree with you, Governor, and I'll back you in every way that I can." And I was very much involved in Greenville, in helping to put all of that together.

### **Voice of Bob McNair:**

I went to Greenville, if you recall, and got on television and to announce we were going to comply, which precipitated the march. I went to Greenville and announced we were going to comply with the court order and that meant complying fully with it. And that included Darlington and elsewhere because we were going to comply...

### **Voice of Richard Riley:**

Once the Greenville order came in, that was it...

### **Voice of Bob McNair:**

Blurred comment.../

### **Voice of Richard Riley:**

I'll tell you this but they finished, David, a video about what happened in Greenville over 30 days. And they called it "Integration with Grace and Style." So, as tense as it was, and as ashamed as we are of the history that we were trying to work out of, a lot of great people came out of that movement, black and white. And we need to think of that as we go forward. We still have a long way to go.



**Voice of former Governor David Beasley:**

Well it didn't happen with grace and style everywhere.

**Another Voice:**

No it didn't...

**Voice of David Beasley:**

We forget about one of the most contentious incidents, and at the time, in America, and it was reported all over the world, and it was in Lamar, South Carolina. The school buses were turned over and it was a very, very hostile situation.

**Roll Videotape:**

(Montage of photos showing violence in the streets...) It was a time of hostility nationwide. And the simple mention of Southern cities\_\_ Little Rock, Arkansas; Oxford, Mississippi; Selma, Alabama \_\_ brought forward visions of violence, anger and hatred. It was into these conditions that a World War II Veteran from Moncks Corner stepped. Robert McNair was thrust into the Civil Rights battle in the mid-1960's. An accidental governor, he assumed the office when then Governor Donald Russell gave up his seat to become a United States senator.

Governor McNair walked a political tightrope, trying to integrate court ordered integration and the congressionally mandated voting rights act while maintaining his political viability. He, along with state business and community leaders, worked together to do just that, with the notable exception of a violent incident in Orangeburg in 1968, South Carolina avoided becoming another Little Rock, or Oxford or Selma. His successors also face challenges on the racial front but Robert McNair proved to be, some historians say, the right man at a most difficult time.

*End of Video.*