

Maestas V. Shone

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Background: Cases in the United States have long argued whether kids should attend school with a similar race. Brown V. Board has long been established as a breakthrough for segregation in the United States. However, Maestas V. Shone had a major impact on a small-minded community years prior to Brown V. Board.

Information: 1912 in Alamosa, Colorado, two schools divided the area. September 2nd, 1913, Francisco Maestas approached the Superintendent of the schools and requested to enroll Miguel in the school closer to their home. If his request was approved Miguel would not have to cross the busy railroad dividing the area. Francisco's request was denied, the Superintendent said he had to enroll his son in the Mexican School. Francisco gathered other Mexican families facing similar situations. Resources were pulled together and they formed "the Spanish American Union." The Union drafted a resolution, it was signed by 180 members. This paper was presented to the School Board and ignored. The community Priest Father E.J Montel, traveled to Denver to hire a lawyer. Raymond Sullivan; in 1913 Sullivan filed charges against the Board of Education.

Impact: Raymond stated the school district was prejudiced. They could not separate Mexican from Caucasian children in places of education. He declared the Colorado Constitution prohibited discrimination against race. The school district couldn't deny Miguel the choice of attending the school of his choice. Counteracting these claims, they responded that many other students as well as Miguel were only placed in the "Mexican School" to fulfill their deficiency in the English language. They claimed Miguel was Caucasian therefore it was not racial injustice. Many of Miguel's teachers reported he could fluently speak a sentence and complete classwork in English. During the trial, Judge Charles of the District Court ruled the students should be enrolled in the closer school. Judge Charles saw Miguel along with many other students were multilingual, they could understand instruction in the American school. The school district was ordered to allow Miguel to attend the school of his choice.

Conclusion: The Maestas family and people throughout their community saw issues and fought to resolve them. They were tired of racial injustice in their community and sought ways to end it. Experts believe the outcome to be one of the earliest Mexican school segregation cases ruled in favor of the Plaintiff. The people involved broke boundaries in their community and fought to change laws.

Thesis: Miguel Maestas' case was a win for Mexican-Americans living in Alamosa, Colorado. Mexican-Americans living in Alamosa were experiencing racial injustices within the education system. They hired a lawyer and fought the school district. It was ruled the school district was being prejudiced. Miguel and his family helped Mexican-Americans in their community win the right to attend the school of their choice.