

# A Bridge to Justice

## The Life of Franklin H. Williams

narrated by  
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Buffalo • Toronto Public Media

### Facing Adversity

Grades 7 - 12

2 Class Periods

### Program Segment

- Groveland

### Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Think critically and historically on examples of civil rights leaders and their practices
- Practice interview style communications and journalistic writing

### Instructional Resources

- *A Bridge to Justice: The Life of Franklin H. Williams*
- Access to the internet and/or library resources
- Interview Worksheet

### Procedures

#### CLASS PERIOD 1

1. The teacher will ask students to define adversity. The dictionary defines adversity as: *a state or instance of serious or continued difficulty or misfortune*. Students should be asked to think of specific examples in history and on a local level. (EX: Do you know of someone who has stood up for civil rights in the face of extreme opposition? Can you think of any examples of where you have seen this?)
2. The teacher will introduce Franklin H. Williams as civil rights leader and lawyer and explain that they are going to watch a video segment from *A Bridge to Justice: The Life of Franklin H. Williams*.
3. The class will watch the segment, then the teacher will follow up with a discussion around Franklin Williams standing up for what he believes is right, despite violence, attacks, and threats.
4. The teacher will ask the students to think about an individual historically or locally, who they may or may not know personally, who has faced adversity. Their example may be similar to the story of Franklin Williams or different, but showing adversity.
5. If possible, students will arrange to interview an individual, using the Interview Worksheet, to learn more about their story of adversity. If an interview is not possible, or the example is historical, the students should write a journalism piece on the specific example.
6. The teacher should tell the students to write an introduction to their interview transcription or journalism piece that explains why they chose the individual they did and what they hoped to learn more about. The written work should also include a conclusion about what they learned.

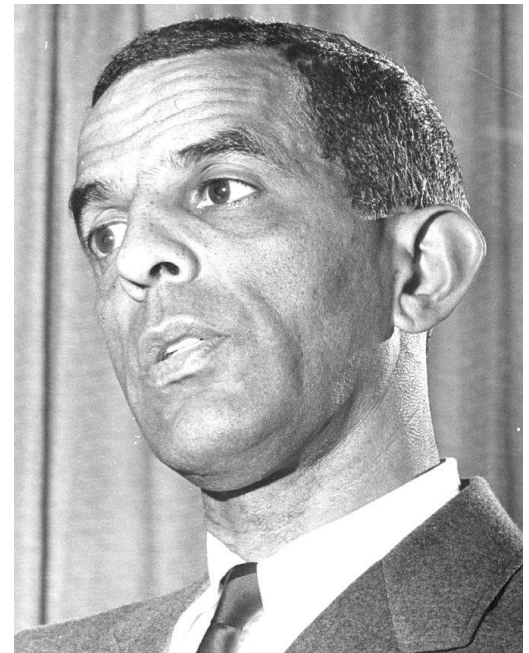


Photo credit: Getty Images

## **CLASS PERIOD 2**

1. After time has been given to students for conducting interviews or researching a historical story, students will present their interview or writing piece to the class followed by a classroom discussion.

### **Assessment Tasks**

- Students will hand in their written piece and/or interview transcription.
- Students will give a presentation to the class.

### **Extension Activities**

- Thurgood Marshall takes over the retrial that Franklin Williams has worked hard for and Williams is transferred to a different location. Ask students: *What did you think about the hard work and dedication Franklin Williams put into the case, only to have someone else take over?* Have the students write an essay on a personal experience they have had where they felt put in a similar situation as Williams.

*A Bridge to Justice: The Life of Franklin H. Williams***Interview Worksheet**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Think about an individual, to interview, who has faced adversity or stood up for something they believed in. Below are some ideas to help you get started on the interview process.

1. Research! Think about an individual you know who has faced adversity. Do you know someone who has a story to tell? Is there a person you look up to you in your life who has overcome difficulties based on bias? Once you have identified a subject to interview, be sure to take the time and research the year(s), events, and articles that are relevant to the person you are going to interview.

**Who are you going to interview?** \_\_\_\_\_

2. Reach out to your interviewee and schedule a time to meet or conduct an interview over the phone. Be sure to ask if they are comfortable sharing their story, and if you have permission to record or transcribe the conversation.
3. You should come to your interview prepared with a few leading questions that will spark discussions and conversations.

*Use these to get you started:*

- a. Can you tell me a little about yourself? Name, age, where do you live?
  - b. Can you tell me about a moment in your life that had a significant impact on you? (This can be the story you thought of before your interview).
  - c. Tell me a story about a time where you felt like you needed to act or stand up for what you believed to be right, even when faced with consequence or threats. Would you make the same decision again?
  - d. Can you reflect on a time that you thought your beliefs were challenged? What happened? How did you react?
  - e. What does it mean to stand up for your beliefs? What does that look like or mean to you?
4. Don't forget to include an introduction that explains why you chose the individual you did and what you hoped to learn more about. Also include a conclusion about what you learned after your research and interview.