



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
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## **Juvenile Defendants Enter Guilty Pleas for Vandalism of Historic Ashburn Colored School**

LEESBURG, Virginia – February 1, 2017. Five Loudoun County juveniles, aged 16 and 17, appeared before Judge Avelina Jacob in the Loudoun County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court in January and each entered guilty pleas to one count of destruction of private property and one count of unlawful entry.

The five teens were charged in connection with vandalizing a historic schoolhouse that once served the County's African American students. The five youths spray-painted graffiti on three sides of the small wooden structure during the evening hours of September 30, 2016. The juveniles appeared again before Judge Jacob this week, at which time Jacob withheld a finding of guilt conditioned upon each of the juveniles successfully completing probation and a series of requirements outlined by prosecutors as part of the plea agreement.

"It became very apparent to us as we reviewed the facts, and their statements to detectives, that these kids truly did not appreciate the significance or the meaning of what they were drawing on the building. It also became obvious to us that their motivations had nothing to do with bigotry or hatred toward any class of people," said Commonwealth's Attorney Jim Plowman. Of the five youths, three are of a minority class. The drawings on the building consisted of swastikas, dinosaurs, vulgar sexual images and words such as "brown power" and "white power." "Because of this, we are seizing the opportunity to treat this as an educational experience for these young men so they may better appreciate the significance of their actions and the impact this type of behavior has on communities and has had throughout history."

During their probationary period, the five will each be required to visit the United States Holocaust Museum and "The Day of Remembrance: The 75th Anniversary of Executive Order 9066" exhibit at the American History Museum. They will also be required to write one book report per month for the next twelve months from an approved list provided to them (see attached). None of the reports may be substituted for a regular school assignment. Books were chosen based on their literary significance and/or their subject matter content surrounding race, religion and discrimination.

The teens will also be required to write a research paper explaining the message that swastikas and white power messages on African American schools or houses of worship send to the African American community as well as the broader community, which includes other minority groups. The research paper must reference and include the history of the KKK lynchings, the Nazi “final solution,” the Dred Scott, Plessy v. Ferguson, and Brown v. Board of Education court decisions.

Finally, each teen must listen to a recorded interview of Ms. Yvonne Neal, describing her experiences at the Ashburn Colored School. Ms. Neal attended the Ashburn Colored School from 1938 until 1945.

The cases are set to be reviewed in January 2018.

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## LIST OF APPROVED BOOKS

1. **The Color Purple**- Alice Walker
2. **Native Son** – Richard Wright
3. **Exodus** – Leon Uris
4. **Mitla 18**- Leon Uris
5. **Trinity** – Leon Uris
6. **My Name is Asher Lev** – Chaim Potok
7. **The Chosen** – Chaim Potok
8. **The Sun Also Rises** – Ernest Hemingway
9. **Night** –Elie Wiesel
10. **The Crucible** – Arthur Miller
11. **The Kite Runner** – Khaled Hosseini
12. **A Thousand Splendid Suns** – Khaled Hosseini
13. **Things Falls Apart** – Chinua Achebe
14. **The Handmaid’s Tale** – Margaret Atwood
15. **To Kill A Mockingbird** – Harper Lee
16. **I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings** – Maya Angelou
17. **The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks** – Rebecca Skloot
18. **Caleb’s Crossing** – Geraldine Brooks
19. **Tortilla Curtain** – TC Boyle
20. **The Bluest Eye**- Toni Morrison
21. **A Hope In The Unseen** – Ron Suskind
22. **Down These Mean Streets** – Piri Thomas
23. **Black Boy** – Richard Wright
24. **The Beautiful Struggle** – Ta Nehisi Coats
25. **The Banality of Evil** – Hannah Arendt
26. **The Underground Railroad** – Colson Whitehead
27. **Reading Lolita in Tehran** – Azar Nafisi
28. **The Rape of Nanking** – Iris Chang
29. **Infidel** – Ayaan Hirsi Ali
30. **The Orphan Master’s Son**- Adam Johnson
31. **The Help** – Kathryn Stockett
32. **Cry the Beloved Country** –Alan Paton
33. **Too Late the Phalarope** –Alan Paton
34. **A Dry White Season** –Andre Brink
35. **Ghost Soldiers** – Hampton Sides