

Hope's Classroom Bus Tour

(As published in The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking column the week of September 2, 2024)

I am proud of my good friend Katatra Vasquez! She has taken an intense interest in the history of African Americans in Oak Ridge. She has published several books, *Atomic Hope*, *Josie's Hope*, in travel guide form and coloring book forms. All are available on Amazon.com. I was delighted to get to review her manuscripts and provide comments.

Now she expands her contribution to African American History by providing a tour of some of the most significant sites related to African American history in Oak Ridge. The tour and other events are sponsored by Oak Ridge Periodic Tables and Scarboro Community Alumni Association.

The Atomic Hope Heritage Preservation and Tourism Company and The Scarboro Monument Committee presents the *Hope's Classroom Bus Tour* on September 7, 2024. The tour commemorates the 69th anniversary of the Scarboro 85's amazing contribution to our Civil Rights efforts and honors those 85 Scarboro students who desegregated the Robertsville Junior High School and Oak Ridge High School on September 6, 1955.

The historical guided tour will provide information to students and adults on Oak Ridge's untapped history. Some of the Scarboro 85 students may be available throughout the tour and also at the program between the tours. There will be two tour times. The first tour starts at 11 a.m. and the second tour starts at 2 p.m. Both tours start from the Oak Ridge Civic Center/Senior Center parking lot.

Admission is \$20 per person. Proceeds will benefit the Scarboro 85 Monument Committee's efforts to erect a monument to the Scarboro 85 in A. K. Bissell Park.

Contact information: Call 859-475-3141 to reserve your place on the bus tour.

The Scarboro 85 Monument Committee invites the community to attend this educational event.

Katatra said regarding the tour, "There are many sites in Oak Ridge that highlight our amazing African American History all over the city but considering time and space I have narrowed the tour to four significant stops and where there is travel time will have some interactive related activities. At the last stop, if possible, we plan to have one of the Oak Ridge 85 students present."

I find this quote regarding building bridges to be an excellent thought. "The legal system can force open doors and sometimes even knock down walls, but it cannot build bridges. That job belongs to you and me." - Thurgood Marshall

Katatra continues, "In our collective American story, the basic human experience of hope connects us all. Hope's Classroom is a transformative guided tour through Oak Ridge, Tennessee's Secret City, where participants explore pivotal sites marking the journey of African American students from segregation and desegregation to integration.

"These sites highlight the commitment to learning and progress, showcasing how education served as a powerful tool for empowerment and change. This interactive experience includes engaging activities that foster a shared understanding of hope and enhances intercultural relationships through historical insights."

Hope's Classroom Bus Tour

(As published in The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking column the week of September 2, 2024)

The tour will use Daryl Lindsey's Olympus tour bus and supporting black-owned Razzleberrys with a signature historic peach ice cream. Please see the Hope's Classroom Tour Description below with proposed sites.

Tour Stops (1.5 Hour Tour)

Meet at the Oak Ridge Civic Center/Senior Center parking lot at 1405 Oak Ridge Turnpike (Choose tours at 11 a.m. or 2 p.m.)

Tour Stop 1 - Former Scarboro School Site in the Scarboro Community, 160 Hampton Road (This location is where Arizona Officer moved the Scarboro School in 1949 from the location highlighted in Tour Stop 2. The students desired to bring the name of the school with them and ultimately the community chose the name, Scarboro, to designate the entire community not just the school)

Tour Stop 2 - Manhattan Project Era Scarboro School for African American Children, Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education, South Campus, 1299 Bethel Valley Road (Alden Blankenship hired Arizona Officer to start a school for African American children when they were first allowed to be brought to Oak Ridge after the World War II Manhattan Project effort which restricted African American parents from living together or bringing their children to Oak Ridge. This school building had been there prior to the Manhattan Project.)

Tour Stop 3 - Manhattan Project Era Hutment, Oak Ridge History Museum, 102 Robertsville Road (typical of the housing provided for all African Americans during the Manhattan Project as well as other construction workers in Happy Valley across the road from the K-25 Gaseous Diffusion Plant construction site as well as in the south most portion of the city of Oak Ridge where Aldi's, Panera Bread and Aubrey's restaurant are located today)

Tour Stop 4 - Oak Ridge High School Desegregation Marker, 1450 Oak Ridge Turnpike (A Tennessee Historical Commission state historical marker provided by the Rotary Club of Oak Ridge [noon club] and designating one of the two locations [Robertsville Middle School being the second location today] where this historical desegregation event took place which is now being recognized as the first desegregation of public schools in the Southeast)

Katatra Vasquez, Atomic Hope author, historian, and speaker will guide the Hope's Classroom Bus Tour. On this tour participants will go through a journey of integrated education in the Oak Ridge

A 1:15 p.m. a commemorative anniversary/kick off campaign program will be held. Program participants include supportive quotes of the monument by: John Spratling, Ram Uppulluri, Ray Smith, and Pat Postma. Rose Weaver, City of Oak Ridge Poet Laureate will present poetry. Details of the Scarboro 85 Monument Project with discussion regarding Phase 2 will be provided by John Spratling, Scarboro 85 Monument Committee Chair.

Food will be provided by small business Black owned and operated businesses Razzleberrys Oak Ridge with peach ice cream and Zeke's Food Truck with soul food.

This series of events commemorating the Scarboro 85 historic desegregation which led much of the other such efforts and set the pace for civil rights advances in the entire nation by demonstrating such action

Hope's Classroom Bus Tour

(As published in The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking column the week of September 2, 2024)

could be taken even in the deep south has for way too long been unobserved. It is a delight to see attention being given to these brave young students who are now in their later years and some even passed away before proper recognition was provided.

The Scarboro 85 significance goes far beyond just the community of Scarboro and the city of Oak Ridge or the state of Tennessee, it goes nationwide. The actions of these brave young students marks the beginning of integration efforts in earnest by desegregating the first public schools in the southeast. The ensuing actions of the Civil Rights Movement must credit the Scarboro 85 as an early demonstration of the potential of success.

I am proud to have been selected to serve on the Tennessee Schools Social Studies Standards Review Committee which selected the Scarboro 85 story as one that should be taught in EVERY school in the state. The Scarboro 85 monument being designed now, and funds being raised for its construction will enable Oak Ridge to be placed on the Civil Rights Trail and the Scarboro 85 will be appropriately recognized in museums and civil rights tourism locations across the nation.



Scarboro School teachers pose with Arizona Officer, principal seated.

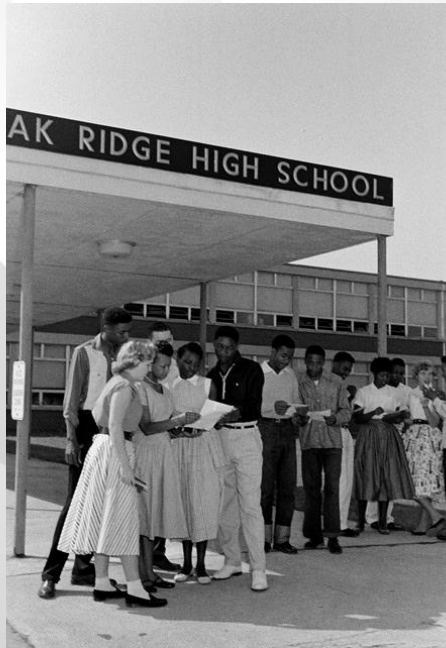
Hope's Classroom Bus Tour

(As published in The Oak Ridger's Historically Speaking column the week of September 2, 2024)

*Atomic Hope Heritage Preservation and Tourism Company &
The Scarboro 85 Monument Committee
Present*

HOPE'S CLASSROOM BUS TOUR

The Journey of Integrated Education in the Oak Ridge Secret City



CALL 859-475-3141 TO BOOK YOUR CLASSROOM BUS TOUR

WHAT TO EXPECT:

- OR 85 Special Appearance
- Interactive Activities/Discussions
- Razzleberry's OR Peach Ice Cream & Zeke's Food Truck
- A Historical Adventure Guided Tour
- Commemorative Anniversary/Kick Off Campaign Program at the AK Bissell Park, beginning at 1:15 PM

TOUR DETAILS:

- Saturday, September 7, 2024
- 2 Tour Times Available from 11-1PM and 2-4PM
- \$20 per person, a portion proceeds benefits the Scarboro 85 Monument Construction
- Meet Up at Civic/Senior Center, 1405 Oak Ridge Turnpike Oak Ridge, TN
- Parking available at Civic/ Senior Center

Flyer advertising the events of September 7, 2024