

WILLIAM MINNER



[William Minner](#)

Topeka, Kansas (4)

The memory of a traumatic childhood incident near his hometown of Spiro, Oklahoma, still brings tears to the eyes of William Minner, director of the Kansas Human Rights Commission.

We had stopped at a spring. It was a very popular place that both blacks and whites would go to get water. We had waited there for about 30 minutes. But the people ahead of us, they were all white. When we had reached our turn, two white men grabbed my dad. They told him that he'd have to wait until all of the white people were finished. Dad said, "We'll get our water another day or we'll come back." They wouldn't let my dad leave. They said, "You're going to stay here, and when all of the good white people have gotten their water, and when everyone is gone, then you can do what you want to." When all the white people finished getting their water, Dad got his water. I remember him telling me, "What you saw there was real hatred and prejudice. But this is not going to be forever . . . there's gonna come a day when this won't be anymore."