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The Cost of Segregation || Part I: Racial Attitudes

Commentary

Segregation too costly to ignore

By Mark Silverman / The Detroit News



Mark Silverman

The U.S. census made official last year what most of us already knew -- Metro Detroit is the nation's most segregated area.

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And while many people, regardless of race, seem outwardly content living politely separate lives here, some are unaware there's a price for that preference.

Indeed there is, and that's why The Detroit News and our reporting partners from WDIV-TV Local 4 are taking this unprecedented look at the cost of segregation to our lives and to our children's future.

For three weeks, on Sundays and with a special section on Mondays, The News will explore our attitudes toward race, examine the paths that led to the present, assess the economic, social, and political cost of segregation and project the future we face if present patterns continue.

Those costs are real and they are shocking: Segregation makes it harder for some people to get a good education and earn a good living. Segregation makes some of life's amenities difficult if not impossible to achieve for many people. Even benign segregation condemns some Metro Detroit residents to lives of lower expectations.

Our reports include a scientific poll of Michigianians' attitudes toward segregation, plus we'll ask for your views via our Web site, detnews.com.

"The Cost of Segregation" lends voice to quiet thoughts about issues of race that are discussed rarely and often uncomfortably. Only by looking honestly at how we live today can we be prepared to shape the future.

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