

SEARCH
DETNEWS.COM

GO

GREAT Gifts Under \$20 

Monday, January 21, 2002

[Return to Metro](#)

The Detroit News

[E-mail this story](#)

[Comment on this story](#)

[Previous story](#) [Next story](#)



The Cost of Segregation || Part 2: Paying for Preferences

Debating the cost

Professor: Segregation hits blacks hard

By The Detroit News

Thomas Sugrue grew up in Detroit and Farmington Hills amid the white flight of the 1960s and '70s. He's a historian at the University of Pennsylvania and author of *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*. He spoke to The News about segregation and its costs. Excerpts:



Sugrue

- [Comment on this story](#)
- [Send this story to a friend](#)
- [Get Home Delivery](#)

Q: You've said the differences in segregation levels between Detroit and other metro areas aren't large, but as a native Metro Detroiter, do you see things that set this area apart?

A: Detroit is a case where the city-suburban boundary has been a pretty hard and fast one. Detroit also doesn't have the same neighborhood amenities in the city that have served in other cities, like Chicago, as magnets for white yuppies.

Q: Many Metro Detroiters believe the area's segregation doesn't really matter, that it has no real negative effects. You disagree. Why?

A: It matters in a bunch of different ways, but particularly in specific economic ways that are not often thought about, but are enormously important. Because whites have little desire to live in black neighborhoods, that has meant real estate values in those neighborhoods have remained low. Most Americans get the vast majority of their wealth from real estate.

Q: You and other researchers also believe segregation damages the job aspirations of blacks. Why?

A: On so many different levels, from attitudes and beliefs to economic opportunity, those networks we all build in school matter so much. I think of the people I went to school with who got great jobs and got their lives together because their dads knew people who brought them on at some company. There were few black kids who

SITE INDEX

- Homepage
- Search
- CyberSurveys
- ▶ News Talk
- ▶ Autos Talk
- ▶ Sports Talk
- ▶ Lions Talk
- ▶ Pistons Talk
- ▶ Wings Talk
- ▶ Tiger Talk
- ▶ Tech Talk
- Horoscope
- Hot Sites
- Lottery
- Recommendations
- Weather
- Staff

NEWS

- Autos
- ▶ Insider
- ▶ Auto Show
- ▶ Consumer
- ▶ Joyrides
- Business
- Careers
- Census
- Columnists
- Commuting
- Detroit History
- Editorials
- Health
- Metro / State
- ▶ Livingston
- ▶ Macomb
- ▶ Oakland
- ▶ Wayne
- ▶ On Detroit
- Nation / World
- Obituaries
- ▶ Death Notices
- Politics / Govt.
- Real Estate
- Religion
- Schools
- Special Reports
- Technology

SPORTS

- Sports Home
- ▶ Lions/NFL
- ▶ Red Wings/NHL
- ▶ Pistons/NBA
- ▶ Shock/WNBA
- ▶ Tigers/Baseball
- ▶ MSU
- ▶ U-M
- More Colleges

[more colleges](#)
[Golf Guide](#)
[High Schools](#)
[Motor Sports](#)
[Outdoors](#)
[More Sports](#)
[Scoreboards](#)

ENTERTAINMENT

[Entertainment](#)
[▶ Casino Guide](#)
[▶ Movie Finder](#)
[▶ TV Listings](#)
[Crossword](#)

HOMESTYLE

[Homestyle home](#)
[▶ Decorating](#)
[▶ Food](#)
[▶ Gardening](#)
[▶ Home Improvement](#)
[▶ Home Life](#)
[▶ Home Tech](#)
[▶ Wine Report](#)

PHOTOS

[Sports](#)
[Red Wings](#)
[Lions](#)
[Autos](#)
[Joyrides](#)
[News](#)
[History](#)

went to Brother Rice. But the white kids there got access to some extraordinary networks that contained no black faces whatsoever.

Q: Does segregation carry costs for whites as well?

A: In America today there are a lot of institutions, corporations and so forth that are increasingly diverse. White folks who grew up in segregated communities aren't well prepared for dealing with those institutions. In the University of Michigan affirmative action case, for instance, a lot of corporations have filed briefs saying, basically, "We live in a multinational universe, and we want our workers to be prepared for this."

Q: Are there examples that integration is helpful?

A: In Chicago, a good example of how this has worked is under a court order in the Gautreaux case, which provides vouchers for low-income residents to get apartments anywhere in the metro area. That gives people who have been consigned to public-housing projects a choice in where they live. And the folks who have availed themselves of that choice have done much better in terms of education and economic status.

[▶ Comment on this story](#)

[▶ Previous story](#) [▶ Back to index](#) [▶ Next story](#)

Copyright 2002
The Detroit News.

Use of this site
indicates your
agreement to the
[Terms of Service](#)
(updated
08/09/2001).