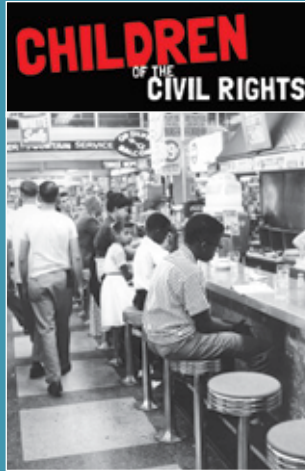


The “Children of the Civil Rights” is an hour-long documentary that tells the story of black Oklahoma City teenagers who in 1958 started what would be six years of sit-ins at local eating establishments. For Julia Clifford, the film’s director and producer, it was a labor of love and a project she believes would not have been possible to finish without the Oklahoma City Community Foundation. Thanks to a community activity fund she established, individuals were able to make charitable contributions that helped defray the film’s costs and allowed Julia to complete the documentary. To learn more about the film, visit [www.childrenofthecivilrightsfilm.com](http://www.childrenofthecivilrightsfilm.com).




Courtesy of the Oklahoma Publishing Company August 19, 1958

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# Documenting Oklahoma City History

In August 1958, a group of black Oklahoma City children, led by teacher Clara Luper, began peaceful sit-ins at local restaurants and lunch counters. The sit-ins were the first in the country and resulted in the desegregation of many of Oklahoma City's eating establishments prior to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

This vital piece of history is not nearly as well-known as the sit-ins that occurred later in Greensboro, N.C., or the marches in Selma, Ala. That's something that Julia Clifford hopes her documentary, "Children of the Civil Rights," will change. Clifford was inspired to make the documentary, for which she served as director and producer, after learning her own father was one of the first white Oklahomans to join the sit-ins.

"No one knew that a group of Oklahoma City kids were heroes, not even the kids themselves," she says. "For six years, a group of children went into restaurants and asked for service. It never got violent and it really never made national news but it did make a difference."

Clifford started the process of making the documentary in 2008. She established a community activity fund at the Oklahoma City Community Foundation so individuals could make charitable donations to help defray the costs of the film. In addition, the fund received several anonymous grants from donor advised funds we administer.

"Working with the Oklahoma City Community Foundation was absolutely critical to successfully navigate the research, filming and completion of the film," Clifford says. "Nancy Anthony and her staff saw the potential of



Courtesy of the Oklahoma Publishing Company Fall 1958

*In 1958, a group of black Oklahoma City children began nonviolent sit-ins at local restaurants. The sit-ins would continue for six years and helped to desegregate many of the eating establishments.*

the documentary in 2008, and I consider them our partner and our hero. Together, we brought "Children of the Civil Rights" documentary to life."

The film was first screened on Feb. 1, 2015 at the Oklahoma History Center. While the main focus of the film is the Oklahoma City sit-ins, the film also provides accounts of the violent sit-ins that occurred in the South, the Selma marches and also interviews with individuals involved with those efforts including U.S. Rep. John Lewis. The documentary is being shown at schools and civic groups across the country. You can learn more about the film at [www.childrenofthecivilrightsfilm.com](http://www.childrenofthecivilrightsfilm.com).