**Notes on “Eyes on the Prize – Awakenings” Brown v. Board of Ed./Emmett Till Murder**

These notes will be helpful when completing your next American Dream Barometer

**Historical significance of the court decision on Brown v. Board of Education:**

The Supreme Court ruled unanimously in Brown v. Board of Ed., that segregated schools were unconstitutional

It called into question the whole system of segregation

It was quite a shock to many white southerners that the way they had been running their affairs for many years was unacceptable to the nation as a whole

Many older white southerners knew their customs went back to colonial times and felt they knew the laws of America as well as anybody else

The South resisted desegregation with legal and illegal delays

 It would take years before the Supreme Court's decision would be implemented in any meaningful way. But it had one immediate effect. It was a statement to the black community that they had a friend, so to speak, the Supreme Court. And so, it emboldened the communities of blacks around the country to move forward, to secure their own rights.

The change began slowly, especially in rural areas. Blacks knew they could still lose their livelihood or their lives if they pushed whites too fast. But step by step, the change began, first with small acts of personal courage.

In September 1955, and old man named Mose Wright took that remarkable first step. His story starts at the Tallahatchie River in Money, Mississippi. Here, the body of Mose Wright's nephew, Emmett Till was found way down in the waters. Two local men were arrested and charged with the murder. They were white. Emmett Till was black. Till had come down from Chicago to visit his relatives.

**Forms of protest used during the Emmett Till murder trial by everyday citizens:**

Till’s body was shipped home, back North to Chicago where Mamie Till Bradley insisted on an open casket funeral, "So all the world can see," she said, "what they did to my boy."

*Jet* magazine showed Till's corpse, beaten, mutilated, shot through the head. A generation of black people would remember the horror of that photo.

Black organizations like the NAACP and the black press were especially interested, and they worked hard to keep the case in the news, to make an example of Southern racism for the world.

Congressmen came down to Mississippi to put a light on the story