



Members of the 1972 Hendersonville High School Bearcats—a state championship team—pose with filmmaker David Weintraub during a filmed interview for *Color Beyond the Lines*. Courtesy of David Weintraub.



Filmmaker David Weintraub (left) during an interview segment for *Color Beyond the Lines*. Courtesy of Flat Rock Together.



Archival photograph of a classroom at Ninth Avenue School. Courtesy of David Weintraub and 828newsNOW.

## Film *Color Beyond the Lines*

David Weintraub's new film revisits when black schools in WNC closed

By Dennis Ray

**S**egregation, while dismantled for good reason, is often framed through a one-sided and narrow lens. Most popular accounts emphasize the resistance of white communities to integration and the determination of Black families to gain access to white schools. But less attention is paid to what Black communities lost in the process. As with freeway expansion in the 1950s and '60s, integration often came at the cost of Black homes, neighborhoods, and institutions that had served as cultural and communal anchors.

*Color Beyond the Lines* central theme is expressed in a quiet but powerful moment when a former Ninth Avenue School student reflects, "Something was taken away from us." What disappeared wasn't just a building—it was a network of teachers, traditions, and relationships that had sustained Black communities for generations. For many families, school integration happened without their input. Decisions were made elsewhere, with little regard for what those communities valued or needed. They had limited say in what kind of progress would truly serve them.

In the late 1800s, Black families—still navigating the dangers and limitations of Reconstruction—began setting up schools wherever they could: in kitchens, basements, churches. By the 1920s, Henderson County had Black schools in seven communities—Clear Creek, Etowah, Saluda, and several others. These schools were neighborhood fixtures, where children gathered, families invested their hopes, and communities shaped their future leaders.

Opened in 1951, the Ninth Avenue School (once stood on the present site now occupied by Hendersonville Middle School), became the central institution for Black education in Henderson County for the next 14 years.

The documentary examines, through present-day interviews with former Ninth Avenue alumni and local Black leaders, how deeply students and teachers identified with the school. They describe it as a shared space where learning was rigorous, expectations were high, and a deep sense of belonging shaped daily life.

Archival photographs and patient-focused interviews give weight to these reflections, grounding them in a specific time and place. The film avoids sentimentality, yet the respect for what was built there is unmistakable.

In 1965, the schools were integrated. Black students moved into classrooms that had once excluded them. The shift brought opportunities—but also left a trail of disruption. Schools like Ninth Avenue shut down.

One of the documentary's more uplifting sequences comes with a look at the 1972 Hendersonville High basketball team. Four of the starters were Black. They won the state championship.

The film's style is intentionally modest. *Color Beyond the Lines* tells the story through interviews and archival materials, creating a clear, grounded, and respectful presentation without a voice-over guiding the audience. There are no sweeping effects or dramatic music—just steady, honest storytelling. David Weintraub, who has spent years documenting mountain communities, brings quiet discipline and

respect to the project. His partnership with the Hendersonville Black History Research Group keeps the film grounded in lived experience.

With AI-generated music, sound effects, and computer animation now common in documentaries, it's refreshing to watch a film that uses none of it. *Color Beyond the Lines* relies entirely on still photographs, lived experience, and the voices of those who were there. The film doesn't push an argument or take a side—it simply listens alongside the viewer. The memories shared may not be exact—memory never is—and the viewer doesn't mind. What matters is hearing people speak for themselves. Weintraub understands that these stories, shaped by time and emotion, carry the weight. The result is a film grounded in honesty—clear-eyed, restrained, and faithful to its subject.

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### ASHEVILLE PREMIERE

Thursday, September 18, 7-8:30 pm  
Reuter Center (UNCA/OLLI), 300 Campus View Rd., Asheville, NC. This event features filmmaker David Weintraub, screening, and a Q&A session.

### TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY SCREENING

Tuesday, September 30, at 6 pm  
Rogow Room, Transylvania County Library, 212 South Gaston Street, Brevard, NC. This screening includes a discussion hosted by David Weintraub.

For tickets and more info visit :

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