

Fight for *Freedom for All*



Olmstead Decision



INCLUSION



DIGNITY



CHOICE



COMMUNITY



OPPORTUNITY

Lois[♡] Curtis

[1967–2022]

In what was called “*the most important decision for people with disabilities in history*,” the Olmstead Decision justified the **right for people with disabilities to live independently** but would take **four years** to come in effect including being heard in the Supreme Court.



Right to
**LIVE
INDEPENDENTLY**



Right to
**DIGNITY &
RESPECT**



Right to
MAKE CHOICES



Right to
**FULL PARTICIPATION
IN COMMUNITY LIFE**

Lois' Background



A life of segregation.
A fight for freedom.
A legacy of change.



1

Curtis was diagnosed with **intellectual and mental disabilities**.



2

Experienced a lot of **trouble** at **home** and **school**.



3

Several police calls resulted in Curtis being taken to **jail** or to a **mental hospital**.



4

Lois was voluntarily admitted to the state-run **GA Regional Hospital**.



5

By the time Lois was in her mid-20s, she had spent **over half of her life** shuttled from facility to facility, segregated by her disability.



6

Lois would frequently call Legal Aid with the same question: ***"When can I get out of here?"***



7

She would remain there until she was **29 years old**.

Road to a *New Beginning*



May 11, 1995, Sue Jamieson,
legal aid attorney took Curtis' case



Challenged Tommy Olmstead,
the commissioner of the Georgia
Department of Human Resources,
whose decision kept Curtis in
the hospital



Elaine Wilson added later



A case. A challenge. A turning point.
The beginning of change.



RBG-3 Requirements

The Supreme Court outlined **three key criteria** for community placement.



01

Treatment officials **deem it appropriate** for the patient to **live in the community**,



02

The **person doesn't object** to living in the community, and

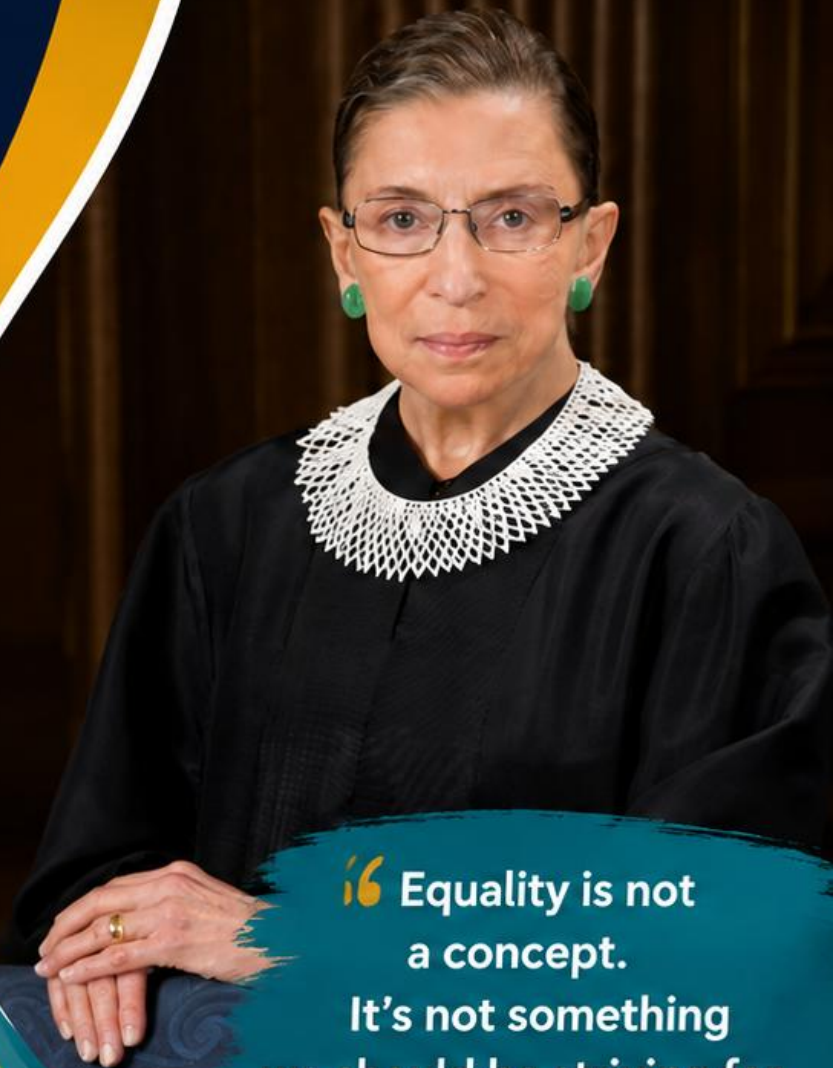


03

Where the state can reasonably accommodate the placement, considering **the resources available** and **the needs of others with disabilities**



Three requirements.
One commitment to justice.



“Equality is not a concept. It’s not something we should be striving for. It’s a necessity.”

– Ruth Bader Ginsburg

American's with Disability Act

A circular icon with a white background and a blue border, containing a black silhouette of the scales of justice.

Title II of the ADA prohibits public entities, including state and local governments, from discriminating against “**qualified individuals with disabilities**” by excluding them from services and activities due to their disability. As part of the ADA, federal regulations were created to enforce the Act. One of the regulations created by the United States Justice Department was called the “**integration mandate.**”

A circular icon with a yellow background and a white border, containing a black silhouette of three hands holding three people, with a heart above them.

The **integration mandate** requires public entities to
“administer services, programs, and activities in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of the qualified individuals with disabilities.”

This integration mandate would become the basis of the **Olmstead decision** in 1999.

A circular icon with a green background and a white border, containing a white checkmark.

Equal access. Full participation. A stronger community for all.
That is the promise of the ADA.





The Olmstead Decision, *in part...*

From
ISOLATION



To
INCLUSION

“Institutional placement of persons who can handle and benefit from community settings perpetuate **unwarranted assumptions** that persons so isolated are **incapable** or **unworthy** of participating in community life” ”



The Olmstead Decision upholds the **dignity, rights, and potential** of every individual.



Everyone belongs.
Community is the promise.



Lois' Life

• LIVING. CREATING. ADVOCATING. THRIVING. •



Lived in her
own apartment



Took
art classes



Sold her drawings
for profit



Advocated in
her own life

“

Well, I make grits, eggs, and sausage in the morning and sweep the floor. I go out to eat sometimes. I take art classes. I draw pretty pictures and make money. I go out of town and sell me artwork. I go to church and pray to the Lord. I raise my voice high! In the summer I go to the pool and put my feet in the water. Maybe I'll learn to swim someday. I been fishing. I seen a pig and a horse on a farm. I buy clothes and shoes. I have birthday parties. They a lot of fun. I'm not afraid of big dogs no more. I feel good about myself. My life a better life.”



My life
a better
life.

 Lois' story shows the **power of choice, opportunity, and belonging.**

When given the chance, people thrive.

Lois' Artwork



Bold. Expressive. Full of life.

A glimpse into the creativity and passion of Lois.



Self Portrait



Duck



Three Friends



“Art is how
I share my
world and
my voice.”



Source



Ryan Knight, Feb. 11, 2018 #RespectTheAbility



www.respectability.org