

Bakke «*BAH kee*», case, was an important civil rights case decided by the Supreme Court of the United States. In this 1978 decision, the court ruled that university admissions policies may not use quotas to achieve racial balance. However, these policies may give special consideration to members of minority groups to achieve variety in a student body.

The official name of the Bakke case is *Regents of the University of California v. Allan Bakke*. Bakke, a white engineer, was refused admission to the University of California Medical School at Davis in both 1973 and 1974. He later learned that his grades and test scores were higher than those of several applicants who had been admitted to the school under a special program for members of minority groups. Bakke sued the university, claiming that his application had been rejected only because he was white.

The Supreme Court issued a two-part decision. In the first part, five justices ruled against the medical school's special admissions program and ordered Bakke admitted. Four justices based their decision on the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits racial discrimination by a school receiving federal funds. The fifth justice, Lewis F. Powell, Jr., based his decision on the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, which guarantees all citizens equal protection of the law.

Powell issued an additional opinion, which formed the second part of the Supreme Court's decision. He stated that schools could consider race or ethnic background as one factor among others in determining admissions. Powell's opinion was supported by the four remaining justices, who upheld the medical school's plan. The decision was widely regarded as a compromise that did not help schools determine how to achieve a desired racial mix of students without impermissible racial quotas.

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