

# THURGOOD MARSHALL



# AMERICAN HERO



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# THE EARLY YEARS

**O**n July 2, 1908, a little baby boy was born in Baltimore, Maryland. His parents named him Thoroughgood Marshall after his great-grandfather, a former slave who fought as a freed man for the Union Army during the Civil War. Thoroughgood's mother, Norma Arica Marshall, was a grade school teacher who was one of the first blacks to graduate from Columbia Teacher's College in New York City. William Canfield Marshall, his father, was a **railroad porter** and the **head steward** at an all-white club. He was also the first black to serve on a **grand jury** in Baltimore during the 20th century.

Thoroughgood went to school in Baltimore, Maryland. When he was in second grade he changed the spelling of his first name to Thurgood, because Thoroughgood had too many letters for his teachers to remember! He attended Douglass High School, an all-black school. Whenever Thurgood got into trouble at school, his teachers would send him to the basement to copy parts of the **United States Constitution**. By the time Thurgood graduated at the age of 16, he had memorized most of the Constitution!

When Thurgood was attending the famous black college, Lincoln University, in Chester



County, Pennsylvania, he met and married Vivien Burey on September 4, 1929. In 1930, he graduated with honors. Although Thurgood's mother wanted him to be a dentist, he wanted to be a **lawyer**. Thurgood wanted to go to the University of Maryland School of Law, but they wouldn't let him because he was black. His mother believed in him, so she pawned her engagement and wedding rings to pay for the entry fees to the Howard

University Law School in Washington, D.C. At Howard University Law School, he met Charles Hamilton Houston, the school's vice dean, and they became good friends. Thurgood graduated first in his class in 1933.

1908-1933

# CIVIL RIGHTS LAWYER



**A**fter graduation, Mr. Marshall began over 30 years of public service supporting **civil rights** -- the right of all people to be treated fairly and equally, regardless of their race. Mr. Marshall opened a private law practice. Meanwhile, Charles Houston became a chief **counsel** (lawyer) for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the first black man to win a case before the Supreme Court. Mr. Houston invited Mr. Marshall to come work for him, so in 1934, Mr. Marshall became a lawyer for the Baltimore branch of the NAACP. He moved to New York City to become a lawyer for the NAACP in 1936. In 1938, he took Mr. Houston's place as the chief counsel and served until he was appointed to the Federal bench as the director-counsel of the NAACP legal defense and educational fund.

At that time in America, black people were not allowed to have the same jobs, go to the same schools, or have the same rights as white people. This was called racial segregation. During his work with the NAACP, Mr. Marshall developed a plan to fight racial segregation. He argued many law cases at the local, state, federal, and Supreme Court levels to fight racial segregation.

As the NAACP director-lawyer, Mr. Marshall won 29 out of 30 court cases argued before the United States Supreme Court. His most famous case was *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka* in 1954, which paved the way for the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

Mr. Marshall's wife, Norma, died of cancer in 1955. He married Cecilia A. Suyat on December 17, 1955. They had two sons together.

By this time, Mr. Marshall was very famous for his work promoting civil rights. So, on September 11, 1962, President John F. Kennedy appointed him to serve as a **judge** for the United States Second Circuit Court of Appeals. He served for four years, and wrote 98 essays on the judgments he made. None of these cases were overturned by the Supreme Court!

On August 24, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed Mr. Marshall **solicitor general**, or the nation's chief counsel or lawyer. Mr. Marshall was the first black man to serve in that position! He won 14 of the 19 cases he argued.

1934-1966

# SUPREME COURT JUSTICE



**O**n October 2, 1967, Mr. Thurgood Marshall became the first black United States **Supreme Court Justice**, which is a lifelong job. Mr. Marshall wasn't sure he wanted the job because he wanted to keep fighting for American's civil rights. However, he said "when one has the opportunity to serve the Government, he should think twice before passing it up." President Johnson said that appointing Mr. Marshall was "the right thing to do, the right time to do it, and the right man in the right place."

Mr. Marshall worked as a Supreme Court Justice for the rest of his career. As a justice, he continued to support civil rights causes and had the courage to vote the way he thought best even when he didn't agree with the other justices. Mr. Marshall became sick, so he retired from the Supreme Court on June 28, 1991. He died of heart failure

on January 24, 1993, at Bethesda Naval Medical Center in Baltimore. Mr. Marshall was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Mr. Marshall is survived by his wife, Cecelia, and his two sons. One son, Thurgood Marshall Jr., is currently a member of the management team for a startup business airline. He is the former Assistant to the President and Secretary to the Cabinet in the Clinton Administration, and a former senior staff member in the U.S. Senate. Mr. Marshall's other son, John William Marshall, is Virginia's Secretary of Public Safety, a former state trooper and Director of the United States Marshals Service.

## AN AMERICAN HERO

**M**r. Marshall is remembered as an American hero for his lifelong efforts to promote equal treat-

ment for all Americans, regardless of their race. He continued to help these causes even after his death because he left all of his personal papers and notes to the Library of Congress and gave them permission to share them with all American people.

Many people across America wanted to remember Mr. Thurgood Marshall in a special way. The University of Maryland named its law library after him. The City of Baltimore put an 8-foot-tall bronze statue of Mr. Marshall outside the federal courthouse. The Texas Southern University School of Law was renamed the Thurgood Marshall School of Law. The annual Thurgood Marshall Award recognizes people's long-term contributions to promoting civil rights and human rights in the United States.

Because of his lifelong work promoting fair and equal treatment of all Americans, Mr. Thurgood Marshall is an American Hero. When asked by a reporter how he wished to be remembered, Mr. Marshall said, "He did the best he could with what he had". He did, indeed!

1967-1993

# THURGOOD MARSHALL

# LESSON PLANS

## Thurgood Marshall: A Thoroughly Good Man

### Objectives

1. Students will chronicle at least five major events of Thurgood Marshall's life.
2. Students will write a Thurgood Marshall biography.

Materials Needed: Thurgood Marshall: An American Hero biography, rolls of white butcher paper, story paper (blank top half/ lined bottom half), Timeliner and Power Point software, lined chart paper, USPS poster/picture of Thurgood Marshall

### Set Induction

1. Personal Connection: Although they are still young, students have already experienced many important life events (birth, siblings, broken limbs, starting school, first bike, etc.). Students create timelines of their lives. Model how to draw a timeline. Then, have students create timelines depicting at least 5 important life events. Students share in small groups. Display timelines in room.
2. Transition: Show poster. "We are going to be studying about the life of this very famous man. Can anyone tell me who this is? Why is he famous?" Share the lesson objectives.

### Activity

1. Day One: As a pre-reading activity, locate Baltimore, Pennsylvania, and D.C. on the map. Read and discuss "The Early Years" section of the Marshall biography as a read-aloud, individual, or partner reading activity. Distribute story paper. Students illustrate an important event from this section.
2. Day Two: Students share their illustrations. Begin a class timeline of Marshall's life. Review the important events of "The Early Years" section, creating a timeline as a graphic organizer. Using lined chart paper, write a cooperative class story of "The Early Years". Display the timeline and story for student reference. Students write individual versions of "The Early Years" on the lined portion of their story papers. This illustrated version becomes Chapter 1 of their biography.
3. Day Three: Review Marshall's life events by rereading the class story and/or asking two volunteers to share their "Early Years" summaries. Repeat steps 1 and 2 for each of the remaining sections of the biography (Civil Rights Lawyer, Supreme Court Justice, and An American Hero).
4. Publication: Bind students' four illustrated "chapters" with a cover. Use Thurgood Marshall's stamp portrait as a cover illustration or title page. Encourage students to share their biographies with their families.

### Extension/Enrichment Activity:

Form heterogeneous research teams. Assign each team a "chapter" in Thurgood Marshall's life. Teams conduct additional research about that time in Marshall's life and share their information with the class. The class creates a timeline using Tom Snyder's Timeliner software (<http://www.tomsnyder.com/classroom/timelineronline/index.asp>). Research teams create and share Power Point slideshows of Marshall's life.

## Thurgood Marshall: A Justice for All

### Objectives

1. Students will describe the roles and responsibilities of people who are present in a courtroom setting.
2. Students will describe what happens in a courtroom setting.

Materials Needed: chart paper for the K-W-L chart, lined paper, envelopes, stamps, names/addresses of lawyers and judges working at different levels of legal system

### Set Induction

1. Personal Connection: Ask students to journal about a time they've argued with a friend. What was the argument about? How did they resolve the problem? Ask volunteers to share.
2. Transition: "Adults sometimes have arguments they aren't able to solve by themselves, so they go to court. As you remember, Thurgood Marshall spent his life working as a lawyer and a justice in different American courts. He was so good at his work that he became the first black Supreme Court Justice! To learn more about his life's work, this week we are going to learn about who works in a court and what happens in a courtroom."

### Activity

1. Who is present in a courtroom setting? Brainstorm a list of court participants. The list should include: judge, jury, lawyer, defendant, plaintiff, bailiff, and court recorder. What do these people do? Have a dictionary dash. Write "judge" on the board. Students put a dictionary on their desktops and their hands on top of their heads. Discuss where they would

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find “j” in the dictionary. Say “ready-set-go”. Students race to see who can find the word first. Read and discuss the dictionary definition before creating a class definition in kid-friendly terms. Create a class glossary of the court participants, their roles, and responsibilities.

2. What do students know about the American court system? Create a K-W-L chart as a graphic organizer for the discussion. Under “K”, list the facts students know about courts. Write questions about what they want to learn under “W”. Then, as they progress through this lesson, cross off or asterisk accurate/inaccurate facts, add more questions under “W”, or write what they have learned under “L”.

3. Form heterogeneous teams. Give each team a lawyer’s or judge’s name. Students compose formal letters including five questions about the person’s responsibilities and the legal system. Mail the letters. Students share responses as they arrive. Use the KWL chart to record the information they gather. Teams write and mail thank you notes to participating lawyers and judges.

## **Extension/Enrichment Activity:**

Once students have learned about the court system, create and enact mock trials using fairytale figures and situations. For example, using the tale *The Three Little Pigs*, students would identify the legal situation (i.e. destruction of property, assault and battery) and assign parts. They can script the courtroom proceedings or extemporize.

## **Thurgood Marshall: Bridges to Freedom**

### **Objectives**

1. Students will describe what happened in the *Brown v Board of Education* case.
2. Students will tell three facts about Ruby Bridges’ life.
3. Students will tell why they think Thurgood Marshall is an American hero.

Materials Needed: computer with Internet access, large monitor, paper

### **Set Induction**

1. Personal Connection: Ask students to create and share Venn diagrams (two interlocking circles) of how they are the same and/or different from their best friend. Create a class list of how people can be the same or different. Do differences mean we cannot be friends? Should children be banned from going to school because of the way they look?

2. Transition: Back in the 1950s, children were banned from going to some schools because of their race. Remember how Thurgood Marshall wasn’t allowed to go to the University of Maryland School of Law because he was black? That happened to little children, too. They were not allowed to go to the same school as white children. Discuss students’ reactions to this. Thurgood Marshall believed that was very wrong, so he spent his life as a lawyer, and later as a judge, fighting for the rights of all people to be treated equally, regardless of their race.

### **Activity**

1. Marshall’s most famous case was *Brown v Board of Education of Topeka*. People were outraged when the courts decided racial segregation was okay (*Plessy v Ferguson*). When 13 families filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of Linda Brown (a girl in Topeka, Kansas), Marshall was the lawyer who argued the case before the U.S. Supreme Court. He won the case! Find out more about these cases by exploring these student-friendly sites as a class or independent activity:

- <http://www.digisys.net/users/hootie/brown/>
- <http://brownvboard.org/actvybk/cover.htm>
- <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/ka1.htm>

2. The first black child to go to an all-white school was Ruby Bridges. This was such a memorable moment in American history that a famous American painter, Norman Rockwell, painted a picture of Ruby’s first day at school. Go to [http://www.diamondtgallery.com/gallery/the\\_problem\\_we\\_all\\_live\\_with.htm](http://www.diamondtgallery.com/gallery/the_problem_we_all_live_with.htm) to view and discuss this picture. How did Ruby feel? Who are the men with the armbands? Why are there splashed tomatoes on the wall?

3. Learn more about Ruby Bridges by reading these books:

- *The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Dr. Robert Cole (primary level)
- *Through My Eyes* by Ruby Bridges (upper elementary)

### **CLOSURE Activity**

Discuss why Thurgood Marshall is an American hero. Could Ruby Bridges also be considered a hero? Brainstorm a list of past/present American heroes. Create and share postage stamps honoring these heroes.

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K	Z	S	Q	Z	T	H	K	R	B	C	P	E	N	N	S	Y	L	V	A	N	I	A	B	O
G	N	I	Q	H	I	D	Z	O	H	M	A	A	E	V	S	Q	H	K	R	Y	G	S	O	E
O	E	O	E	M	Q	B	C	D	F	E	E	R	V	C	Q	M	V	D	U	R	H	V	C	Q
E	U	R	I	A	T	P	J	A	T	Z	A	T	C	I	Y	M	K	C	E	U	L	I	Z	Y
K	O	P	W	T	E	R	U	O	B	J	C	D	F	O	O	L	O	K	G	J	T	I	Y	W
N	P	I	K	U	A	K	H	B	S	R	L	Q	S	V	N	V	O	O	L	S	H	C	Y	J
U	N	Y	X	K	E	C	Q	V	H	O	D	C	O	T	W	S	P	L	U	Z	D	F	Y	U
X	J	O	U	H	W	A	U	K	P	Y	L	S	B	K	E	A	T	J	E	S	R	C	L	D
O	F	T	I	R	B	K	X	D	R	V	U	I	S	P	V	W	T	I	T	S	U	Q	A	G
Y	W	T	P	T	F	F	D	F	E	C	W	Q	C	S	L	R	A	U	T	V	N	H	E	E
F	J	C	R	X	A	Q	A	L	J	F	K	F	O	I	U	U	V	R	N	U	M	U	N	B
V	A	B	N	U	T	G	R	F	T	F	O	E	Q	O	T	J	L	Q	D	D	T	O	O	S
D	T	B	C	C	O	J	E	D	B	G	U	D	C	O	P	O	D	D	N	Y	H	I	S	C
P	F	K	M	T	X	C	R	R	F	V	O	E	R	B	W	L	R	U	I	T	E	A	O	G
J	D	C	Q	S	Q	Z	Q	Z	G	Q	M	Z	U	A	M	L	A	G	L	O	D	B	S	N
Z	Q	Q	Y	R	E	D	R	O	C	E	R	T	R	U	O	C	Z	I	E	A	A	G	R	S
B	G	Z	R	X	I	X	K	M	R	O	S	T	Y	C	I	B	M	S	N	N	W	O	E	A
A	Y	S	B	F	H	Z	J	P	G	R	X	L	N	R	B	J	V	P	M	T	E	Y	W	T
L	T	E	Y	Q	H	U	U	S	R	H	C	D	A	A	R	M	Z	N	H	H	I	R	E	W
T	Q	I	A	R	M	S	L	K	Z	Y	U	T	K	I	D	J	P	A	W	O	P	F	A	R
I	R	U	B	Y	B	R	I	D	G	E	S	O	B	N	C	N	O	L	H	O	K	M	F	L
M	R	E	T	R	O	P	D	A	O	R	L	I	A	R	Q	A	E	E	Q	M	R	Z	S	J
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R	L	V	T	Z	R	N	F	Y	R	U	J	D	N	A	R	G	Y	J	E	C	N	C	X	M
E	A	C	I	V	I	L	R	I	G	H	T	S	W	A	D	P	T	T	N	D	F	P	T	H

# WORD PUZZLE

Find these words and phrases. They are hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards. Color in your answers. Good luck!

Baltimore, Brown v Board of Education, civil rights, Constitution, court, court recorder, defendant, grand jury, head steward, hero, judge, jury, lawyer, Pennsylvania, plaintiff, racial segregation, railroad porter, Ruby Bridges, solicitor general, Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall.