

Famous African Americans - Thurgood Marshall

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Thurgood Marshall was the first African American to serve as a Supreme Court justice. Lyndon B. Johnson, the 36th president of the United States, appointed him in 1967. Marshall served for 24 years, retiring in 1991.

Marshall was born in 1908 in Baltimore, Maryland. After college, he wanted to go to law school at the University of Maryland. However, the university wouldn't let him because he was Black.

Marshall went to law school at Howard University instead. But his experience with the University of Maryland stayed with him. In 1935, he represented another young African American who was kept out of the university's law school. He claimed that denying Black people the right to go to law school at the university was unconstitutional. Marshall won his case. After that, he devoted his career to fighting racism.

Marshall argued many important cases before the Supreme Court. His most famous case was *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* in 1954. The case was about segregation in schools. At that time, Black children were forced to go to separate, not very good schools. They weren't allowed to go to the schools that white children attended. The education at these white schools was better because these schools received a lot more money from local

governments.

In the *Brown v. Board of Education* case, Marshall argued that separate schools for African Americans and whites were unequal and unconstitutional. The Supreme Court agreed with him. With one case, Marshall helped to change the face of education in the United States.

Thurgood Marshall died in 1993, at the age of 84.