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To commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 2004, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund released “The Winding Road to Brown: An LDF Chronology”. Below is an excerpt of the timeline leading up to the historic decision issued in 1954.



LDF Attorneys on the steps of the Supreme Court: (Left to Right) *John Scott, James Nabrit, Spottswood Robinson, Frank Reeves, Jack Greenberg, Thurgood Marshall, Louis Redding, U. Simpson Tate, George Hayes.*



1933 Thurgood Marshall graduates first in his class from Howard University’s School of Law. Oliver Hill, also a classmate and one of the *Brown* counsels, graduates second. Marshall and Hill were both mentored by the Law School’s vice-dean Charles Hamilton Houston.

1934 Houston joins the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) as part-time counsel.

1935 After having been denied admittance to the University of Maryland Law School, Marshall wins a case in the Maryland Court of Appeals against the Law School, which gains admission for Donald Murray, the first black applicant to a white southern law school.

1936 Marshall joins the NAACP’s legal staff.

1938 Marshall succeeds Houston as special counsel. Houston returns to his Washington, D.C. law practice but remains counsel with the NAACP.

1938 *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada* The U.S. Supreme Court invalidates state laws that required African-American students to attend out-of-state graduate schools to avoid admitting them to their states’ all-white facilities or building separate graduate schools for them.

1940 Marshall writes the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund’s corporate charter and becomes its first director and chief counsel.

1940 *Alston v. School Board of City of Norfolk* A federal appeals court orders that African-American teachers be paid salaries equal to those of white teachers.

1948 *Sipuel v. Oklahoma State Regents* The Supreme Court rules that a state cannot bar an African-American student from its all-white law school on the ground that she had not requested the state to provide a separate law school for black students.

1949 Jack Greenberg graduates from Columbia Law School and joins LDF as a staff attorney.

1950 Charles Hamilton Houston dies. He was the chief architect of the NAACP LDF legal strategy for racial equality, Thurgood Marshall’s teacher and mentor, and Dean of Howard University’s Law School.

1950 *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* The Supreme Court holds that an African-American student admitted to a formerly all white graduate school could not be subjected to practices of segregation that interfered with meaningful classroom instruction and interaction with other students, such as making a student sit in the classroom doorway, isolated from the professor and other students.

1950 *Sweatt v. Painter* The Supreme Court rules that a separate law school hastily established for black students to prevent their having to be admitted to the previously all-white University of Texas School of Law could not provide a legal education “equal” to that available to white students. The Court orders the admission of Heman Marion Sweatt to the University of Texas Law School.

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1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* The Supreme Court rules that racial segregation in public schools violates the Fourteenth Amendment, which guarantees equal protection, and the Fifth Amendment, which guarantees due process. This landmark case overturned the “separate but equal” doctrine that underpinned legal segregation.

Attorneys for the plaintiffs in the five cases that comprised the Supreme Court case were:

Thurgood Marshall, Director-Counsel, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.

Harold Boulware - *Briggs v. Elliott* (South Carolina)

Jack Greenberg, Louis L. Redding - *Gebhart v. Belton* (Delaware)

Robert L. Carter, Charles S. Scott - *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (Kansas)

Oliver M. Hill, Spottswood W. Robinson III - *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County* (Virginia)

James M. Nabrit, Jr., George E. C. Hayes - *Bolling v. Sharpe* (District of Columbia)

Attorneys Of Counsel: Charles L. Black, Jr., Elwood H. Chisolm, William T. Coleman, Jr., Charles T. Duncan, William R. Ming, Jr., Constance Baker Motley, David E. Pinsky, Frank D. Reeves, John Scott, and Jack B. Weinstein.