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Summary Article: **Marshall, Thurgood**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

US jurist and civil-rights leader. As a prominent civil-rights lawyer, he frequently presided over landmark cases such as *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). Marshall was named director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Legal Defense and Education Fund in 1940. He was named to the US Court of Appeals in 1961 and served as solicitor general 1965–67. In 1967 President Johnson appointed him to the US Supreme Court, a post he held until 1991. The first black Supreme Court justice, Marshall was a strong voice for civil and individual rights throughout his career.

In 1936 Marshall joined the legal staff of the NAACP, where he worked to remove the barriers set up for black people by the 1896 ruling that states could provide ‘separate but equal’ facilities for racial minorities. He also persuaded the Supreme Court to force the Maryland Law School to admit non-whites (Marshall himself had been excluded because of his colour). Other universities were forced to admit and desegregate black students. Finally, in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, he led the Supreme Court to abandon the ‘separate but equal’ doctrine and forbid states from establishing separate schooling for black and white pupils.

Between 1944 and 1960, Marshall took 32 cases to the Supreme Court and won 28 of them, convincing the court to ban the ‘whites only’ rule for public waiting rooms, restaurants, and seating on buses. He also overturned covenants preventing the sale of properties to minorities.

On Court of Appeals When Marshall became a Court of Appeals judge, none of his 112 opinions was reversed by the Supreme Court. He supported freedom of speech, passionately opposed the death penalty, and advocated affirmative action to redress the injustices of racial prejudice. He ended the use of whites-only juries. As the court's liberal majority declined, Marshall found himself in the minority in over a fifth of cases during his last court term.

On the Supreme Court Marshall continued to be a steadfast liberal and strong voice for civil rights during his tenure on the Supreme Court. He consistently supported antidiscrimination measures, opposed the death penalty, and upheld the constitutional rights of accused criminals. His staunch support of affirmative action was seen in his dissent in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978). By the time he retired in 1991, he was one of the last remaining liberal members of the Supreme Court. He was replaced by conservative justice Clarence Thomas in 1991.

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