

Mr. Civil Rights

Thurgood Marshall was born in 1908 in Baltimore, Maryland. He became a lawyer in 1933. Lawyers spend years learning about laws. Lawyers represent clients. Clients pay lawyers to help them with the law. The lawyers speak for their clients in courts of law. Another word for lawyer is attorney.

Thurgood started to work for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1934. He helped fight for equal rights for black people. Thurgood traveled all over the United States. He fought for civil rights in courts all across the country. People began to call him Mr. Civil Rights.



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Thurgood argued 32 cases before the Supreme Court. He won 29 of them. The most famous case he won was *Brown Versus Board of Education*. Until then, black children had to go to separate schools. The law said the schools were “separate but equal.”



But they were not equal. The white schools were much better than the black schools. Thurgood proved this to the Supreme Court. He got the Supreme Court to change the law. In 1954, it became illegal to segregate schools.

Winning this case was a big deal. Thurgood became famous. Many people respected him. Presidents gave him important jobs.

In 1967, President Johnson appointed him to the Supreme Court. Thurgood became the first black Supreme Court Justice.

There are nine Justices on the Supreme Court. The Justices listen to Supreme Court cases. They vote to decide which side wins. Their decisions change laws for the whole country.

Thurgood was a Justice for 24 years. It was not easy. Most Justices did not agree with his ideas. But Mr. Civil Rights never gave up. He always fought for what he thought was right.

