

LEVELED BOOK • K

Good for Thurgood!



Written by Marvin Bird



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Thurgood Marshall was born in 1908. He was **African American**, and his grandfather had been a slave. By the time Thurgood was born, it was against the law to own slaves.



Even so, when Thurgood was a child, the **South** still had many laws that hurt black people. They were not allowed to eat in many restaurants that served white people.



Black people in the South were not allowed to sit in the same train cars as white people.



Black children attend an all-black school in Kentucky in 1916.



Black children in the South were not allowed to go to school with white children.



Those laws were unfair. At the dinner table, Thurgood's family used to argue about what to do about those laws. Thurgood became very good at arguing.



Thurgood (standing) gets ready for court in 1935.



When Thurgood Marshall grew up, he went to law school. After he became a lawyer, he argued against those unfair laws in court.



Thurgood stands in front of the Supreme Court.



He argued many cases before the **Supreme Court**—the most important court in the United States. In the Supreme Court, the judges are called *justices*.

Who Serves on the Supreme Court?



The nine justices of the U.S. Supreme Court gather for a portrait in October 2010.

🔊 For many years, only white men served on the Supreme Court. Of the nine justices, there were no women and no people of color. Because each justice gets appointed for life, it took a long time to make things more equal. The first change came when Thurgood Marshall became a justice in 1967. Then the first woman, Sandra Day O'Connor, was appointed in 1981. Today one African American man and three women serve on the court, including one Latina woman.



First, Thurgood argued a case about neighborhoods. He argued that white people should let other people live in their neighborhoods. Thurgood won his case.



Thurgood helped this postal worker go to the same law school as white students in his state.



Second, he argued a case about law school. He argued that black and white people should be able to go to law school together. Thurgood won his case.



Thurgood helped allow black, white, and Latino students to all say the Pledge of Allegiance together.



Finally, Thurgood Marshall argued his most important case of all. He argued that it was unfair to have **separate** schools for black children and white children. He argued that they should go to public school together. Thurgood won his case.



Thurgood traveled a lot in order to argue for the rights of black Americans.



Changing all those laws helped our country in big ways. Thurgood Marshall became a hero for everyone who believed in **equality**. He was a famous lawyer and a very important leader.



Thurgood Marshall smiles before becoming the first black member of the Supreme Court in 1967.



In 1967, he was chosen to be a justice on the Supreme Court.

He still got to argue a lot, and he always argued to make things fair.

Good for Thurgood!

Glossary

African American (<i>adj.</i>)	of or relating to Americans who have black ancestors from Africa (p. 3)
equality (<i>n.</i>)	the condition in which everyone has the same rights (p. 14)
judges (<i>n.</i>)	public officials who decide cases in courts of law (p. 9)
separate (<i>adj.</i>)	set or kept apart (p. 13)
South (<i>n.</i>)	the southeastern part of the United States, especially states that formed part of the Confederacy during the Civil War (p. 4)
Supreme Court (<i>n.</i>)	the highest court of law in the judicial system of the United States (p. 9)

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Back cover: Cecilia Marshall, widow of Thurgood Marshall, unveils a new postage stamp honoring her husband in 2002.

Title page: Thurgood Marshall statue in Annapolis, Maryland

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