

Thurgood Marshall: Before the Court

"Education is teaching to live
together with fellow citizens."



From Minnesota Public Radio's Sound Learning (www.soundlearning.org)

Sound Learning Feature for October 2004

From *American RadioWorks* (www.americanradioworks.org)

This month we revisit an *American RadioWorks* documentary on Thurgood Marshall. Before he was on the U.S. Supreme Court, he was an effective litigator. In this capacity, Thurgood Marshall won a significant victory with *Brown v. Board of Education*, which effectively made school segregation illegal. This feature examines Marshall's impact on civil rights as a litigator and activist—before he was on the Supreme Court.

The articles in this month's feature are of particular interest to teachers and students of American history, political science, and civics.

Segment 1: "Thurgood Marshall: Before the Court"

In the following pages, find instructional ideas and study guides intended to aid in the teaching of:

- Reading comprehension.
- Listening comprehension.
- Critical thinking.
- Research and writing challenges.
- Key terms and topics.



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Questions are based on the feature "Thurgood Marshall: Before the Court" (<http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/marshall/>), from American Public Media's *American RadioWorks* Web site, <http://www.americanradioworks.org>. Sound Learning is a production of Minnesota Public Radio.

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Reading Comprehension Questions

Read the abridged article by [Leon Friedman: *Brown v. Board of Education*](#)

Read: <http://soundlearning.publicradio.org/features/2004/10/friedman.shtml>

Answer the following questions:

1. What has happened to integration of schools since the famous Brown decision removing legal segregation of schools?
2. Why is the Brown decision so important?
3. Why did some feel that segregated education at the elementary level was all right?
4. What was Mr. Marshall's central argument against segregation?
5. What was the final ruling in *Brown v Board of Education*, and who wrote the opinion?

Listening Comprehension Questions

Listen: <http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/marshall/audio.php?media=full>

- Who was the first African American named to the US Supreme Court?
- What were the Jim Crow Laws?
- Who was Charles Hamilton Houston?
- What is the NAACP?
- Who is W.D. Lyons?
- Why is May 17, 1954 so important?
- Why is Little Rock Central High so important?
- What did President Eisenhower do to help integration?



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Critical Thinking Questions

These activities are based on the (abridged) article by [Waldo Martin: *The Brown Decision and Its Discontents*](#)

Read: <http://soundlearning.publicradio.org/features/2004/10/discontents.shtml>

Discussion Items: Divide the students into two groups and prepare debates on the following topics:

- Is it important to have integrated elementary and secondary schools?
- Is the United States committed to integration? What evidence do you have for or against?

Research Challenges

Make a time line of events—taken from the introduction to the Web site. Have students research each item (1-2 students per item) and add their work to a concrete timeline.

Research: <http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/marshall/>



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Key Terms and Topics

- Jim Crow Laws
- Howard University
- NAACP
- W.E.B DuBois
- Plessy vs. Ferguson (1896)
- Oliver Brown
- Brown vs the Board of Education
- Kenneth Clark
- John W. Davis
- Chief Justice Earl Warren
- Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus
- Little Rock Central High School
- Governors George Wallace (Alabama) and Ross Barnett (Mississippi)



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