

Author's Note

Why do I admire Thurgood Marshall? Where should I start? He was a man who endured discrimination because of the color of his skin and decided to do something about it. His way of doing something was through the law. He wanted each person in this country to have the same opportunities.

He was a driving force in the fight for civil rights for all Americans. And he was a real person. He didn't pretend to be something he wasn't. He got angry and let it show. He was kind and let it show. He fought to win, but he was a good winner and not someone who gloated over his triumph.

Thurgood Marshall was a smart man. He did his homework in the law. He researched laws and presented good cases. He stood up for what he believed.

I like what he stood for, and I like that he stood up straight and tall and delivered his message of justice for all.

Veda Boyd Jones

CHAPTER ONE

The Big Case



Lawyer Thurgood Marshall had argued several cases before the Supreme Court. But this one—this one was really big. If the court decided in his favor, it could change the horrible racial relations between black people and white people.

In December 1952, Thurgood and his team of lawyers argued the first of five cases linked under the name *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. That afternoon, tall Thurgood Marshall stood behind the podium. The justices sat straighter in their chairs as his booming voice filled the room.

This case, he said, wasn't just about letting black children go to all-white schools.

This case was more than a violation of the equal protection clause for all Americans under the Fourteenth Amendment. This case was about ending **segregation**.



Blacks line up outside the courtroom at the U.S. Supreme Court for the segregation hearing.