

Why was Thurgood Marshall called “Mr. Civil Rights”?

Thurgood Marshall was a constitutional superstar! People today enjoy their **constitutional civil rights** because Thurgood Marshall dedicated his life to helping others by making sure the rights guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution were given to everyone. He fought for the freedom of African Americans to participate equally in society and government. This was not easy work!

Thurgood Marshall's Early Life

As a child, Thurgood Marshall loved to learn and he loved to debate! He was a good student and he loved to talk. He sometimes got in trouble in class for talking or pulling pranks. When he was being punished, his principal had him read the U.S. Constitution. By the time he left elementary school, Thurgood had memorized the whole Constitution! Thurgood also had great teachers, good friends, and a supportive family.



Thurgood Marshall's mother was a teacher. His father had two jobs. When his father was not working, he often brought Thurgood and his brothers to the courthouse. They would sit in on trials and listen to the lawyers' arguments. At dinner, the Marshalls would discuss the arguments they heard in the courtroom. Thurgood Marshall began to practice the skills of a lawyer at dinner. Their dinner table was often filled with excitement and disagreement!



The Marshall family lived in Baltimore, Maryland. They faced **segregation** in most parts of their lives because they were a Black family in a Southern state. During that time period businesses and government services were allowed to **discriminate** against Black people by refusing service and segregating facilities. Segregation laws and practices affected many daily activities like

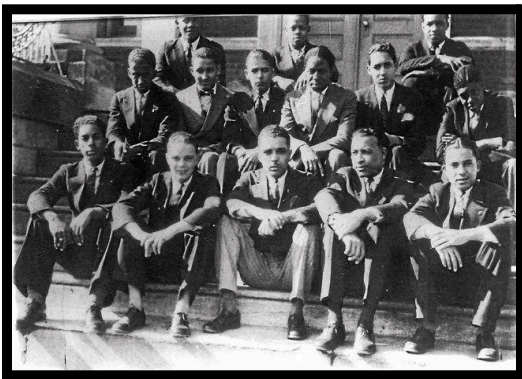
traveling on a bus, shopping in a store, attending school, and swimming in a local

pool. Thurgood Marshall knew segregation was wrong, and he would commit his life to changing it.

Think about it!

What is one detail about Mr. Marshall's childhood that might explain why he became interested in civil rights?

Thurgood Marshall Goes to Lincoln University and Howard Law School



Thurgood and his brother attended Lincoln University, a college for Black students in Oxford, Pennsylvania. At Lincoln, he received an **exceptional** education where he developed strong skills in research, writing, and speaking. He became an **eloquent** and **persuasive** speaker. After graduation, he wanted to go to law school at the University of Maryland, but he was denied

admission because he was an African American. The University of Maryland did not allow Black students. This angered Thurgood Marshall. He chose to attend Howard University Law School.

At Howard University, Thurgood met Charles Hamilton Houston who became his most important teacher and mentor. Mr. Houston had high expectations for his students. He expected them to work toward **perfection**. He wanted them to be **lawyers** that were **confident** in their skills and action. He also wanted them to dedicate their law careers to improving the lives of others. Mr. Houston brought out the best in Thurgood Marshall. In law school, Thurgood Marshall worked to be excellent, and he graduated top in his class.



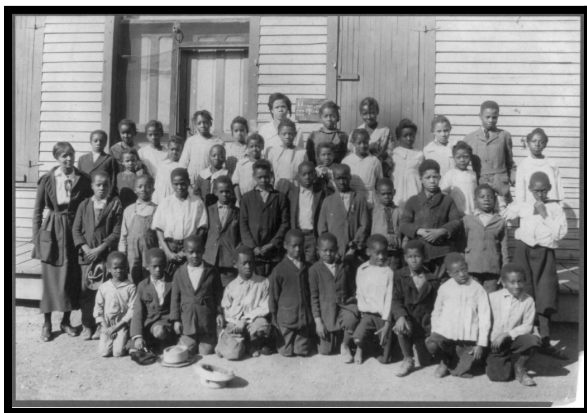
Think about it!

What is one skill that Mr. Marshall developed in college that would help him fight for civil rights?

A Mission to Help Others

Once Marshall graduated from law school, he wanted to fight for people's rights as soon as possible. Charles Hamilton Houston offered him the chance to help people by working for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) where Mr. Houston worked. The **NAACP** still exists today. They fight for the constitutional rights of African Americans by fighting against **discrimination** and **racism**.

Charles Hamilton Houston gave Thurgood Marshall two very important experiences. First, he asked Marshall to help defend a man named George Crawford in court. Mr. Houston and Mr. Marshall helped to save Mr. Crawford's life. This helped Mr. Marshall to understand that a good **lawyer** was important for every person accused of a crime. A **lawyer** helps to make sure people are treated fairly.



Second, Mr. Houston asked Thurgood Marshall to travel with him all across the South to collect **evidence** about the poor conditions of schools for Black children. Marshall was shocked to see the condition of the school buildings. There were few resources for students and no transportation for students to get to school. Thurgood Marshall was saddened and angered by the

conditions in these schools. He also noticed that the schools had talented Black teachers who worked very hard and were not paid very much money. He never forgot that trip. From that day forward, he had a mission. He would improve education for Black children and fight segregation. The NAACP wanted to end racial segregation. Thurgood Marshall would dedicate his life to helping them.

Think about it!

What is one experience that Mr. Marshall had that inspired him to fight for civil rights?

Examining the Primary Source Images!

Directions: Use the four image sets with stars in the bottom right corner to answer the questions.



1. Pick two images and explain how they connect to what you have learned about Thurgood Marshall.

Image 1:

Image 2:

2. Pick two images that connect to the civil rights of people. Explain how they connect to civil rights. What rights do you think the images show?

Image 1:

Image 2:

3. Now that you have learned more about Thurgood Marshall, pick one image and write down ONE QUESTION you have about the image.

How did Mr. Marshall fight for constitutional rights?

For the next 30 years, Mr. Marshall would help many people by traveling all over the South and defending many people in court. He helped save many people's lives by being a good lawyer. He took every **client** he could. He knew that many Black people were being mistreated by the police and the law. When Thurgood Marshall arrived in a town, people came from everywhere to see him argue his cases. People began to call him "Mr. Civil Rights." He gave people hope that segregation and discrimination could end. So many people hoped that he would help them!

Why did Thurgood Marshall need the Supreme Court to help?

The U.S. Constitution said everyone must be treated equally under the law. The U.S. **Supreme Court** is the highest court in the country. The Supreme Court helps to explain what the Constitution means by interpreting the law. Thurgood Marshall had a plan. He would use his skills as a **lawyer** to make sure everyone had their **constitutional rights**. After the Civil War, the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution were added. These amendments ended slavery and guaranteed citizenship, equal protection, and fair treatment. They also said that no one could be denied the right to vote based on race. Unfortunately, the amendments were not being followed. Thurgood Marshall would use his cases to ask the Supreme Court to enforce these constitutional amendments.

Mr. Marshall believed many of his **clients** were not being treated fairly. When people are treated unfairly in a court case, the **client** can **appeal** it to a different court. They can ask a new judge to protect that person's rights. Mr. Marshall appealed his cases to the Supreme Court. He was persuasive and eloquent and worked to convince the Supreme Court to protect people's rights. Over 30 years, Thurgood Marshall would present 32 cases in front of the **Supreme Court**. He won 29 of those cases.



Mr. Marshall's most famous case was ***Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954)***.. In this case, the Supreme Court said that **segregated** schools were unconstitutional. **Segregation** harmed Black children and violated their rights.

Why was Thurgood Marshall called “Mr. Civil Rights”?

Examining the Primary Source Images!

Directions: Find the five images with circles in the bottom right corner. They connect to specific Supreme Court cases.

1. Match the cases below with the correct image set.
2. How does each image/case set connect to the **civil rights** of people?



Supreme Court Outlaws Southern Democrat Ban on Negro Primary Voting
Washington, D. C., in a landmark decision, the Supreme Court of the United States, Monday, April 4, 1960, outlawed the so-called "white primary" in Texas. The Court's decision, by a 9-0 vote, declared unconstitutional the Texas Constitution provision that gave the right to vote in the state's primary elections to "white citizens only." The Court's decision was a major step in the fight against segregation in the South. It was the first time the Supreme Court had ruled against a state law that restricted the right to vote on the basis of race.



A GREAT NEW DAY FOR AMERICANS
May 17-NAACP Freedom Day!
The day the Supreme Court granted a new birth of freedom to public education. The day you can do everything to see further rights for America's racial minorities.



Freedom of Association
It is a right which the freedom to associate for the advancement of religion and other purposes is one of the most important of the "liberty" secured by the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, which forbids states to deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law.

Civil rights are the rights of everyone to have freedom and equality in society. Some civil rights include free speech, voting, education, and the right to participate in society freely.

Thurgood Marshall's Most Important Supreme Court Cases

1. **Smith v. Allwright (1944):** The Texas Democratic Party only allowed White people to vote in primary elections. *Smith v. Allwright* held that a Texas law was unconstitutional. Texas could not have all-White primaries. This case helped to make sure Black people could vote in all parts of the election process.
2. **Morgan v. Virginia (1946):** Irene Morgan, an African American woman, was arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a White passenger on a bus traveling from Virginia to Maryland. In this case, the Supreme Court held that Virginia's law requiring racial segregation on interstate buses was unconstitutional. This case helped end segregation on buses.
3. **Sweatt v. Painter (1950):** Heamann Sweatt was not allowed to attend the University of Texas Law School because he was African American. The state promised to open a separate law school for African Americans. The Supreme Court said a separate school was not enough. Texas had to allow Mr. Sweatt to attend the University of Texas. This case helped to end school segregation in colleges and universities. Thurgood Marshall believed this was a start to desegregating all public schools.
4. **Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954):** Public schools in the state of Kansas, like many other states, segregated students by race. Linda Brown's parents sued the Topeka Board of Education to stop segregated schools. In this case, the Supreme Court held that "separate but equal" school facilities were unequal and violated equal rights granted by the 14th Amendment. This is the most famous case that Thurgood Marshall helped to win. This case helped to end segregation across the United States in elementary and high schools.
5. **NAACP v. Alabama (1958):** The state of Alabama did not like that the NAACP was fighting to end segregation. They wanted to stop the NAACP. The state demanded that the NAACP give them a list of its members. The NAACP refused. They believed Alabama wanted to list in order to harm their

members. They argued that people have the right to be with or associate with others under the First and 14th Amendments. The Supreme Court agreed and said that people have a constitutional right to association. This case helped to protect people who wanted to join organizations like the **NAACP** without fear.

How did Mr. Marshall help others fight for Civil Rights?

Sometimes, people refused to follow the law even after Mr. Marshall won his cases. Mr. Marshall would go back to court and fight to make sure people followed the law. For example, when schools in Arkansas refused to end segregation, Mr. Marshall went back to court. He sued the governor of Arkansas and won. President Eisenhower even sent in the military to make sure the law was followed.

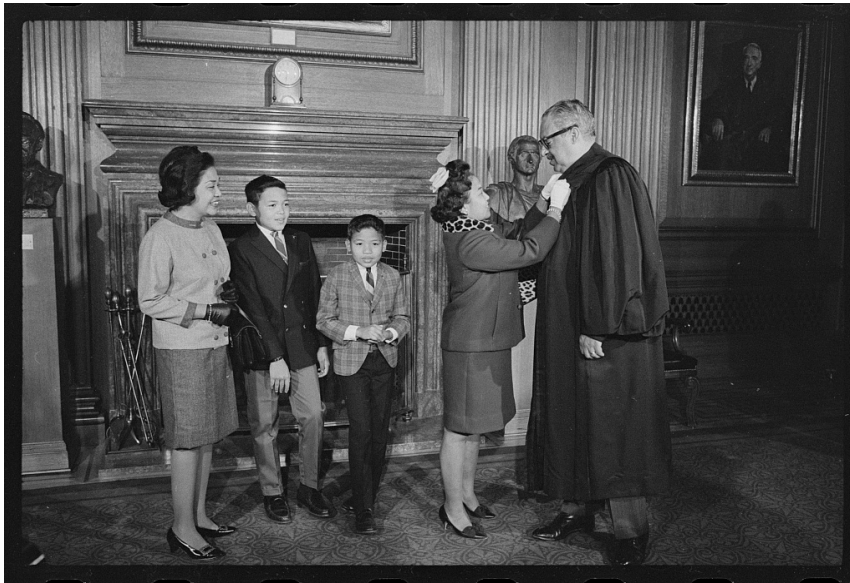


Mr. Marshall's cases helped other people fight for the rights of Black Americans. In the 1960s, many Americans protested to end segregation and discrimination. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other leaders used Thurgood Marshall's victories in court to gain more rights. Thurgood Marshall made sure the law applied to everyone. Leaders, like Dr. King, protested until people followed the law. Thurgood Marshall made sure the NAACP was ready to help when protesters were arrested. Thurgood Marshall's work made the Civil Rights Movement possible.

In 1964 and 1965, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act. These important laws changed the United States. The Civil Rights Act outlawed segregation. The Voting Rights Act helped to protect



everyone's right to vote. By 1965, Thurgood Marshall had been fighting for these rights for 35 years.



When Mr. Marshall was 59 years old, President Johnson nominated him to be a **justice** on the Supreme Court. He was the first African American to serve on the court. For many years before, he stood in front of the Supreme Court as a lawyer. He had asked them to uphold the rights of Black Americans. Now, he would be

a judge on the Supreme Court. He helped to protect the constitutional rights of everyone.

The important work of Thurgood Marshall changed America. Today, many Americans do not think about Thurgood Marshall when they hear about the "Civil Rights Movement." However, the hard work of Thurgood Marshall made the Civil Rights Movement possible. Thank you, Mr. Civil Rights!

How did Thurgood Marshall help to "lay the foundation" for the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s?

Why was Thurgood Marshall called “Mr. Civil Rights”?

Directions: Review the key ideas you learned about Justice Thurgood Marshall.

1. Answer the inquiry question with a historical claim.
2. Provide and explain two pieces of evidence to support your historical claim.

Inquiry Question: Why was Thurgood Marshall called “Mr. Civil Rights”?

Historical Claim: (answer the inquiry question in one sentence)

Evidence #1: (pick a key detail or case that supports your claim and describe it here)

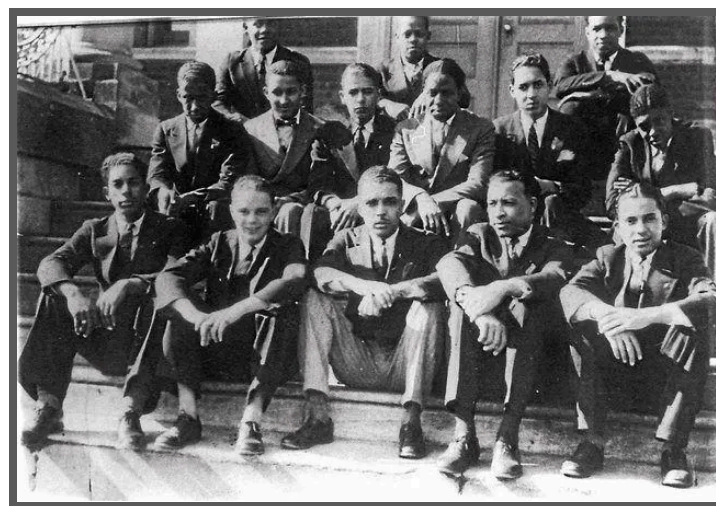
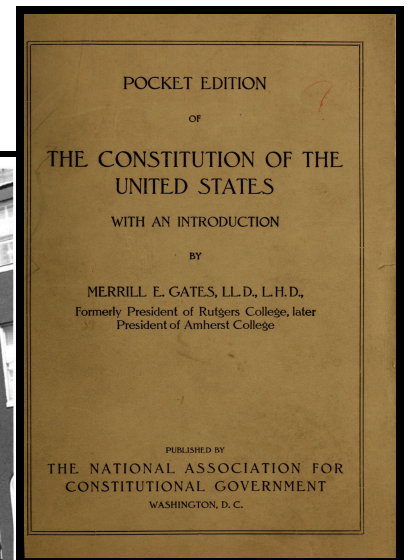
Explanation of Evidence: (explain how your evidence supports your claim)

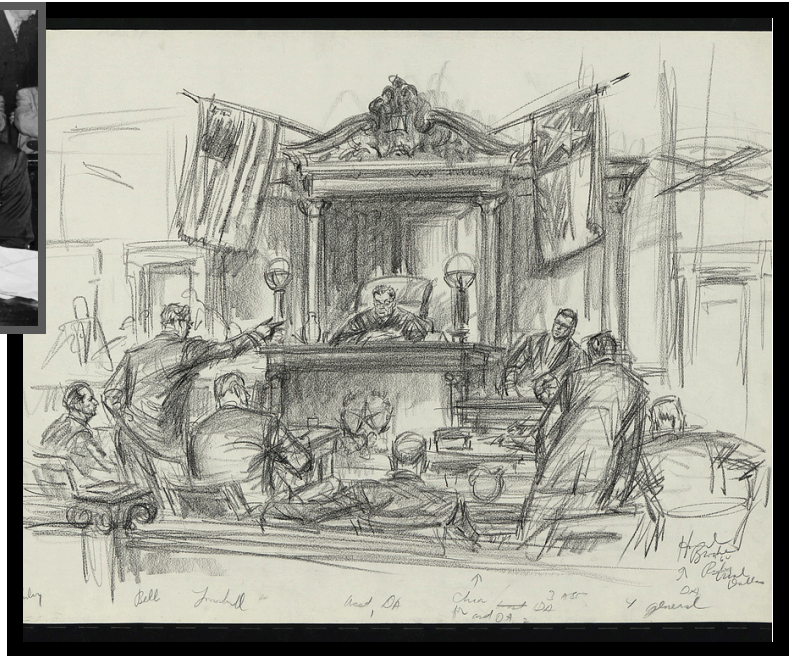
Evidence #2: (pick a key detail or case that supports your claim and describe it here)

Explanation of Evidence: (explain how your evidence supports your claim)

**Printable Student Image
Sets Below (you can also
print the slides)**

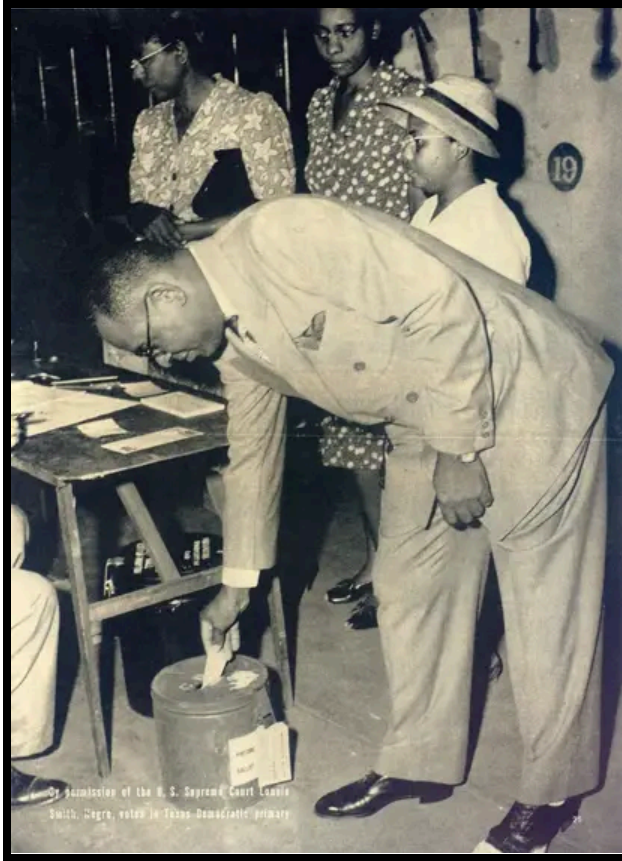






A Study of Educational Inequalities In South Carolina





By permission of the U. S. Supreme Court Building, Negro votes in Texas Democratic primary

Supreme Court Outlaws Southern Democrat Ban on Negro Primary Voting

Washington, D. C.—In a precedent-smashing decision the Supreme Court of the United States, Monday upheld the right of Negroes to vote in the Texas Democratic primaries.

By an 8 to 1 vote, the Court decided in favor of Lonnie E. Smith of Houston, Texas. Smith sued the Harris County election officials for damages and judgment because he was refused the right to vote in the 1940 Democratic primaries. Justice Stanley Reed read the decision for the majority. He stated:

"The court has ruled out the doctrine that the Democratic party as a private organization has the right to make rules on who should vote in Texas primaries. Texas elections are part of the Federal election and therefore subject to the Federal Constitution."

this day and time only."

Justice Roberts' reference to "intolerance for former justices" is evidently an implication that the more recently appointed justices are more liberal in their attitude toward social legislation and issues affecting the welfare of Negroes.

This decision, with its far reaching implications bearing on the problem of the southern Negro and the vote, is one of the most impor-

SUPREME COURT REVOKES JIM CROW BUS LAWS

Court Upholds
Md. Woman
In Bus Ejection

Irene Morgan Wins
11-Month-Old Fight
Against Bus Driver

Jackson

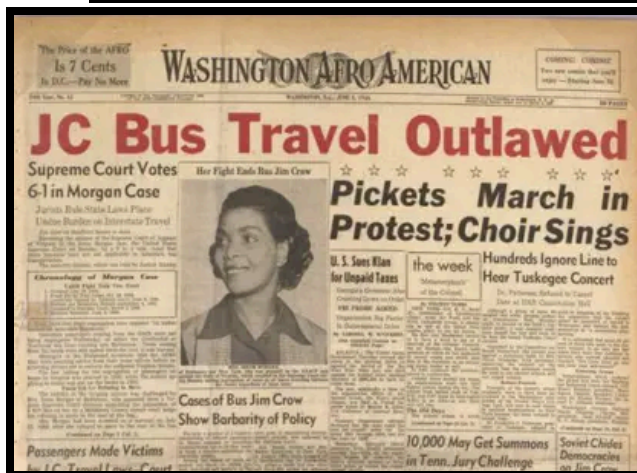


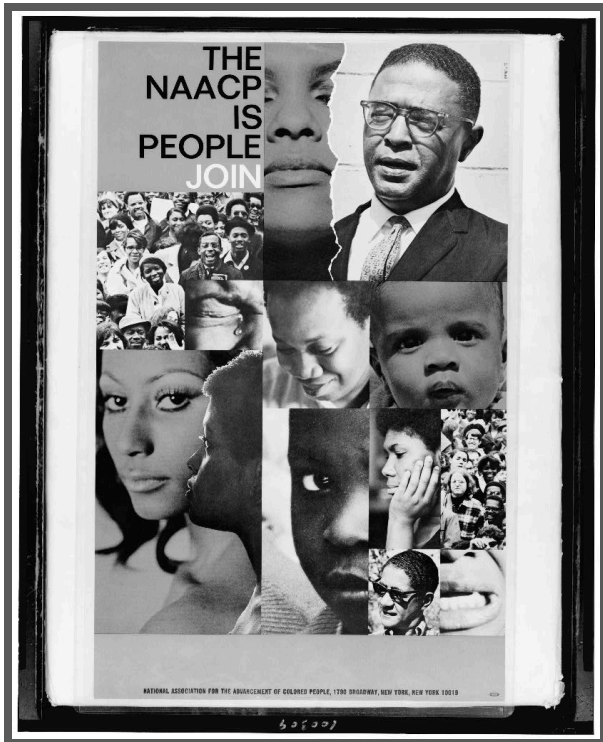
Advocate

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Freedom of Association
It is beyond debate that freedom to engage in association for the advancement of beliefs and ideas is an inseparable aspect of the "liberty" assured by the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, which embraces freedom of speech.
 —From U. S. Supreme Court decision in NAACP v. State of Alabama, June 30, 1958

In a unanimous decision, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People need not reveal the names of its rank and file members to any state agency. The same decision lifted the \$100,000 fine levied against the NAACP for refusal to turn its membership lists over to Alabama officials.

The NAACP, the Court held, "has made an uncontroverted showing that on past occasions revelation of the identity of its rank-and-file members has exposed these members to economic reprisal, loss of employment, threat of physical coercion and other manifestations of public hostility."

The Court said that under these circumstances, the NAACP would be damaged if compelled to reveal the names of its members and would not be able to carry on the program which it has "the right to advocate."

The Court said that if the NAACP were compelled to expose its membership list, people would withdraw from membership and others would not join because of fear of exposure.

The Court then ruled that the NAACP does not have to reveal its membership list to any state agency.

Therefore, no state, including Arkansas, may legally require the NAACP to turn over its membership list. Any state laws requiring the NAACP to do so are unconstitutional. This point has been settled once and for all in the Alabama case and the decision applies to all states.

Anyone can now join and be active in the Association without fear of having his name and activity revealed to hostile state officials or to private persons.

The Court recognized "the vital relation between freedom to associate and privacy in one's associations."

Now is the time to join the Association and add your strength to that of hundreds of thousands of others who have enlisted in the Fight for Freedom for all Americans.

Join your local branch or send your membership fee directly to
NAACP
 20 West 40th Street, New York 18, New York.

