A memorial service celebrating Jack Greenberg will be held on Monday December 5th at St. Paul’s Chapel at Columbia University in New York (1160 Amsterdam Avenue) at 2:30 p.m. A reception will follow at Columbia Law School in Drapkin Lounge (Jerome Greene Hall, 3rd Floor). Please RSVP to Briana Florio at bf2375@columbia.edu [1].

LDF will also be holding its own memorial and will share more details as they are available.

Today, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (“LDF”) deeply mourns the loss of civil rights icon and our second Director-Counsel Jack Greenberg [2], who was the last living attorney who argued the Brown v. Board of Education [3] case in the United States Supreme Court. Greenberg died this morning at his home in New York.

Sherrilyn Ifill, [4] LDF’s current President and Director-Counsel, lauded Jack Greenberg as a visionary leader who was a key architect of modern civil rights law. “Few understand how powerfully Jack Greenberg shaped the practice of civil rights law and the breadth of his contributions to our modern conception of equal opportunity and justice” she said. Ifill added that when Jack’s wife Deborah, herself a brilliant civil rights lawyer and former LDF attorney, noted
that “Jack lived a good life,” Ifill rejoined that “many of us have had a good life, in part because of him.”

For decades Jack was at the forefront of civil rights legal challenges in the federal courts. He argued in the Brown case, he represented Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the other voting rights marchers in Selma in 1965. In response to the employment discrimination provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Greenberg decided that LDF would shape employment discrimination law by filing a thousand cases within a year of the law’s implementation—he filed 850, leaving an indelible mark on employment discrimination doctrine.

Jack Greenberg first joined LDF in 1949 as a 24-year-old Columbia Law School graduate. At the time, LDF’s first and legendary Director-Counsel Thurgood Marshall [5] was looking for an assistant to help challenge Jim Crow laws. Just a few years after joining LDF, 27-year-old Jack became the youngest member of the team of lawyers that brought the Brown school desegregation cases to the Supreme Court. He served as an assistant counsel under Marshall from 1949 to 1961. When Marshall joined the federal bench, Jack succeeded him and served as LDF’s second Director-Counsel for 23 years until 1984, making him the longest tenured leader of LDF.

Jack Greenberg in Memoriam

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A fierce advocate, Jack argued forty cases before the Supreme Court while at LDF, including *Meredith v. Fair* in 1961, which resulted in James Meredith’s integration of the University of Mississippi. He also argued *Alexander v. Holmes County Board of Education* (1969), which mandated segregated school systems to desegregate “at once.” In 1971, he litigated the landmark *Griggs v. Duke Power Company*, which prohibited relying on employment and promotion decisions on the results of tests with discriminatory impact. On the heels of *Griggs*, he scored a major victory in 1972 in *Furman v. Georgia* in which the Supreme Court held that the death penalty violated the “cruel and unusual punishment” clause of the Eighth Amendment, resulting in the suspension of the death penalty throughout the country for four years.

Outside of the Supreme Court, Jack also fought hard and effectively in courts around the country. In 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr. called on Jack and LDF to handle all demonstration cases in which the Southern Christian Leadership Coalition was involved. He oversaw cases ranging from the elimination of racial restrictions on the use of public parks; to discrimination in health care; to busing as a means to integrate public schools.

And Jack’s work did not end with the courtroom. In 1969, he established LDF’s Washington, DC office to expand the organization’s work into the critical realm of federal policy.

After leaving an indelible mark on both LDF and the nation’s civil rights landscape, Jack retired from LDF in 1984 and began teaching at his alma mater, Columbia University, where he had received his undergraduate and law school education. He was an adjunct professor at Columbia Law School from 1970-84; a visiting lecturer at Yale Law School in 1971; and a visiting lecturer at Harvard Law School in 1983, in addition to other positions. He served as Columbia College’s Dean from 1989-93.

In 2001, Jack was awarded a Presidential Citizens Medal. President Clinton noted, "In the courtroom and the classroom, Jack Greenberg has been a crusader for freedom and equality for more than half a century." Five years earlier, the American Bar Association awarded him the Thurgood Marshall Award for his outstanding contributions to civil and human rights. He is a recipient of LDF’s highest honor, the Thurgood Marshall Lifetime Achievement
Award. LDF also honored Mr. Greenberg as part of the organization’s 75th anniversary alumni reunion at the Ford Foundation in September 2015.

Mr. Greenberg given a standing ovation at the LDF 75th Anniversary Alumni Reunion in September 2015.

Jack Greenberg wrote *Crusaders in the Courts: How a Dedicated Band of Lawyers Fought for the Civil Rights Revolution*, a memoir and the definitive biography of LDF’s history. In the book, he reflects on his self-described “moderate iconoclasm” as a Jew born and raised in the Bronx fighting for civil rights. He outlines the legal strategies employed by LDF to achieve landmark victories and offers a vivid portrait of his predecessor and mentor Thurgood Marshall. Jack, who grew up in the Bronx, also describes the role that Jews played in the civil rights movement.

Jack saw a strong resemblance between anti-Semitism and black oppression in the United States. Raised in a family committed to fairness and justice, Jack became part of the black world of the Civil Rights Movement—sleeping in segregated hotels, eating in segregated restaurants and working tirelessly alongside other civil rights advocates in pursuit of justice.

Greenberg is also regarded as a father of civil rights legal organizations. He is a founding member of Human Rights Watch and Mexican American Legal Defense Fund, and helped support and shape the formation of the Asian American Legal Defense Fund and the Puerto Rican Legal Defense Fund (now LatinoJustice). He participated in human rights missions to the Soviet Union, Poland, South Africa, the Philippines, Korea, Nepal, and elsewhere. In recent years, Greenberg was engaged in supporting the efforts of Roma in Europe, who saw comparisons between their struggle and the civil rights legal struggles of African Americans.

Jack Greenberg was born on December 22, 1924 in New York City. He attended Columbia College, graduating in 1945. After graduation, Jack went on active duty in the Navy; he was a lieutenant junior grade and served in the Pacific theatre during World War II as a deck officer. He participated in the invasions of Iwo Jima and Iheya Shima and several other harrowing missions. His ship was headed to Hawaii to pick up more troops for the Japanese invasion when the US dropped the atomic bombs and ended the war. He spent six months in Hawaii before starting Columbia Law School in Fall of 1946.

He is survived by his loving wife Deborah, five children, and five grandchildren. LDF will miss Jack’s advice and counsel which he generously shared until the end.

Read select news coverage:

- A force for good: Jack Greenberg devoted life to pursuing justice and equality [10], Watertown Daily Times (Oct. 16, 2016)
- Life well lived: Civil rights lawyer Jack Greenberg dies at 91 [11], Today.com (Oct. 16, 2016)
- Historic Civil Rights Warrior Jack Greenberg Dies at 91 [12], AFRO (Oct. 15, 2016)
- Last Lawyer From Brown v. Board of Ed Dies At 91 [13], Pittsburgh courier (Oct. 15, 2016)
- Remembering Noted Civil Rights Attorney Jack Greenberg [14], NPR (Oct. 14, 2016)
• Jack Greenberg, Civil Rights Icon Who Argued Brown v. Board, Dies [16], NPR (Oct. 13, 2016)
• Remembering Jack Greenberg [17], The Atlantic (Oct. 14, 2016)
• Jack Greenberg, Key Figure in Brown v. Board of Education Case, Dies at 91 [18], Ed Week (Oct. 13, 2016)
• Warrior for Justice Jack Greenberg Walks On [19], Indian County Today Media Network (Oct. 13, 2016)
• Jack Greenberg, the Lawyer Who Used Law As A Weapon to Desegregate America's Schools [20], Forward (Oct. 13, 2016)
• Jack Greenberg, a Courthouse Pillar of the Civil Rights Movement, Dies at 91 [21], New York Times (Oct. 12, 2016)
• Last Lawyer From Brown v. Board of Ed Dies At 91 [22], News One (Oct. 12, 2016)

Read personal reflections and tributes:

• Reflections of Former President and Director-Counsel Elaine Jones [23]
• Reflections of Former President and Director-Counsel Ted Shaw [24]
• Statement by the President on the Passing of Jack Greenberg, [25] the White House (Oct. 13, 2016)
• MALDEF Mourns the Loss of Jack Greenberg [26], MALDEF (Oct. 13, 2016)
• Civil and Human Rights Coalition Pays Tribute to Legendary Civil Rights Lawyer Jack Greenberg [27], The Leadership Conference (Oct. 14, 2016)
• Jack Greenberg: A Legendary Lawyer With A Large Civil Rights Legacy [28], Advancement Project (Oct. 13, 2016)
• Legendary Civil Rights Pioneer and Beloved Professor Jack Greenberg '48 Dies at 91 [29], Columbia Law School (Oct. 12, 2016)
• Reflections on Jack Greenberg From LDF Alumni Michael Meltsner [30], Huffington Post (Jan. 7, 2015)
• The City Project Grieves Loss of Civil Rights Icon Jack Greenberg [31], The City Project (Oct. 12, 2016)

Highlights from Jack Greenberg’s Life and Career

• Andrew Hawkins v. Town of Shaw, Mississippi [32]
• Arthur Hamm, Jr., v. City of Rock Hill; Frank James Lupper et al., v. Arkansas [33]
• Fred L. Shuttlesworth v. City of Birmingham [34]