Dr. Megan Ming Francis Joins LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) announced today the selection of Dr. Megan Ming Francis as a Fellow of LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute (TMI). Launched in 2015, TMI is a multidisciplinary research and advocacy center within LDF.

As a TMI Fellow, Dr. Francis will conduct research on the development of the Southern criminal justice system following the Civil War and will examine current voting rights challenges in the context of the history of Southern politics.

“We are absolutely thrilled to welcome Dr. Francis as our newest Thurgood Marshall Institute Fellow,” said Sherrilyn Ifill, LDF’s President and Director-Counsel. “Her extensive research on civil rights, social movements, and political activism in the African-American community will offer us vital perspective as we continue to reimagine how best to achieve equal justice in this country.”

“LDF has been a leader in the fight for racial justice because of its bold and innovative vision,” said Dr. Francis. “I’m excited to join TMI and further build the Institute’s social science research capacity.”

Currently, Dr. Francis is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Washington, where she specializes in the study of American politics, race, and the development of constitutional law. Dr. Francis received her M.A. and Ph.D. in Politics from Princeton University. She is particularly interested in the construction of rights and citizenship, black political activism, and the post-civil war South.

Dr. Francis is also the author of the award-winning book, Civil Rights and the Making of the American State, which tells the story of how the early campaign against state-sanctioned racial violence of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People shaped the modern civil rights movement. She is currently at work on a second book that examines the role of the criminal justice system in the rebuilding of southern political and economic power after the Civil War.

“We know that Dr. Francis’ research and depth of expertise will be indispensable to our work to advance racial justice and equality,” said James Cadogan, Director of TMI.
TMI’s Fellows Program engages leading scholars and experts to produce cutting-edge research, innovative study, and analysis of structural inequality that help LDF and the advocacy community address today’s social justice challenges.

Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation’s first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.