For Immediate Release
Thursday, April 13, 2017

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NAACP Legal Defense Fund Statement on the Passing of Judge Sheila Abdus-Salaam

We are shocked and saddened by news of the death of Judge Sheila Abdus-Salaam, a brilliant and pioneering lawyer and jurist. Judge Abdus-Salaam was the first African-American woman to serve on the New York Court of Appeals, the state’s highest court. She reportedly became the first female Muslim judge in the United States when she served on the State Supreme Court in 1994. Judge Abdus-Salaam was a member of a cohort of highly accomplished Columbia Law School graduates, many of whom are members of the LDF family. We offer our deepest condolences to the family of Judge Abdus-Salaam, her friends, colleagues and law clerks.

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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.