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NAACP Legal Defense Fund Delivers Closing Statements in Trial to Determine Future of Race-Conscious Admissions at Harvard

BOSTON – The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. ([LDF](#)) made closing statements today in the federal trial that seeks to eliminate race as one of many factors used in Harvard’s holistic admissions process, threatening diversity at the college.

“Harvard’s diversity puts students in an environment where people of different backgrounds stop being faceless others, and become classmates, teammates, lab partners, and friends. In this process, stereotypes are undermined, cross-cultural relationships grow, and deeper understandings of complex social problems are formed,” said [Cara McClellan](#), NAACP LDF Skadden Fellow. “Diversity is one of the most meaningful aspects of the preparation that Harvard students receive. Harvard must be permitted to pursue the benefits of diversity if it is to fulfill its educational mission.”

In 2014, Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA), an organization run by well-known civil rights adversary Edward Blum, filed the lawsuit in an attempt to stop Harvard from considering race in its application process. A group of 25 Harvard student and alumni organizations, representing a broad range of backgrounds and racial and ethnic heritages, filed amicus briefs this past [July](#) and [August](#). Three current students and a Harvard alum also testified this past Monday. These organizations have been represented by LDF and [Sugarman Rogers](#) in the case. The students and alumni assert that diversity is a crucial part of the Harvard educational experience, and that holistic admissions creates this rich living and learning environment.

LDF is a leading voice in the decades-long struggle for equitable college admissions policies, from its early efforts to desegregate colleges and universities throughout the Jim Crow South to its recent advocacy on behalf of Black students as amicus curiae in [Fisher v. University of Texas](#). In *Fisher*, the United States Supreme Court ruled against Edward Blum and Abigail Fisher, reaffirming the Court’s longstanding position that, given the critical importance of diversity in higher education, universities may consider race as one of many factors in admissions decisions.

Read the LDF brief and declarations from Harvard student and alumni organizations [here](#).

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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.