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LDF Marks 70th Anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*, The Case That Transformed America

(Washington, D.C.) - Today, the [Legal Defense Fund](#) announced [a slate of events and offerings to mark the 70th anniversary](#) of the consolidated legal case it led and won, [Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas](#). The landmark victory to end state-sanctioned segregation in America occurred only after a hard-fought, multi-year campaign conceived by Charles Hamilton Houston and executed by [LDF's founder and first Director-Counsel Thurgood Marshall](#), alongside [a team of dedicated lawyers](#) and clients in a coordinated group of five lawsuits against school districts in Kansas, South Carolina, Delaware, Virginia, and Washington, D.C.

“The work of *Brown* is far from finished, and its legacy is all of ours to defend and build upon.” said [Janai Nelson, LDF President and Director-Counsel](#). “Efforts to divide people of different backgrounds, distort the meaning of equal protection of the laws, and distract from the continued need for racial equity—in classrooms and beyond—are mounting. Now as much as ever before, we must aggressively advance the pursuit of equal opportunity for everyone in our multi-racial democracy which is the core of the *Brown* decision and the unfinished business of the Civil Rights Movement. Our generation, which has enjoyed the fruits of the integrated society *Brown* created, must do its part to fully realize *Brown*’s promise.”

LDF is using the occasion of the 70th anniversary to re-educate, remind, and renew focus on the achievements and the promise of *Brown* with an offering of rich educational content issued by its [Thurgood Marshall Institute](#) (TMI). The yearlong commemoration of the landmark case continues with LDF’s signature event, the [National Equal Justice Awards Dinner](#), on May 16 in New York City, followed by a special panel discussion [co-hosted with the NAACP](#) on May 17 in Washington D.C.

In a unanimous ruling on May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court declared the “separate but equal” doctrine unconstitutional, marking a new standard for American education. The ultimate decision gave hope to millions of Americans by permanently discrediting the legal rationale underpinning the racial caste system that had been in place since the end of the nineteenth century.

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Founded in 1940, the [Legal Defense Fund \(LDF\)](#) is the nation’s first civil rights law organization. In media attributions, please refer to us as the Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note: LDF 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.