



For Immediate Release
Monday, November 24, 2025

LDF Media
media@naacpldf.org

LDF Mourns the Loss of Viola Ford Fletcher, Oldest Known Survivor of 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre

The [Legal Defense Fund \(LDF\)](#) mourns the passing of Viola Ford Fletcher, the oldest known survivor of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. Known affectionately as “Mother Fletcher,” through a century-long pursuit of justice, she helped to incite a national reckoning about racialized violence and reparative justice in Tulsa. Ms. Fletcher was 111 years old at the time of her death.

Raised in Oklahoma’s Greenwood District, an affluent, well-established all-Black community known famously as “Black Wall Street,” Ms. Fletcher was just seven years old when a racist white mob violently destroyed the town. During a two day spree, more than 1,000 homes and businesses were demolished while hundreds of people were murdered, injured, or forced to flee. For most of Ms. Fletcher’s life, her and the Tulsa community’s experiences were left largely unacknowledged by the nation. In 2021, Ms. Fletcher delivered historic testimony before Congress that forced the country to confront the lasting harm of the devastating event and expand a critical national dialogue towards reparations and accountability.

“With heavy hearts, we mourn the profound loss of Ms. Viola Ford Fletcher and honor her extraordinary life and legacy. Our deepest condolences are with Ms. Fletcher’s family and loved ones at this time. Her courage and conviction galvanized a national reckoning and reshaped the nation’s understanding of one of the most violently traumatic instances of racialized violence documented in American history,” said LDF President and Director-Counsel Janai Nelson. “Though it took more than 106 years for her story to gain national attention, Ms. Fletcher remained tireless and unwavering in her pursuit of justice to ensure that the story of Greenwood, its destruction, and its descendants would not again be erased. Ms. Fletcher’s legacy will live on as a ceaseless testament to the power of truth-telling, formidable moral clarity, and an unshakeable conviction for justice.”

###

Founded in 1940, the [Legal Defense Fund \(LDF\)](#) is the nation’s first civil rights law organization. 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 Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that 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.