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CIVIL RIGHTS GIANT AND FIRST BLACK SUPREME COURT JUSTICE
THURGOOD MARSHALL HONORED ON BLACK HERITAGE STAMP SERIES

WASHINGTON – Thurgood Marshall, a famed civil rights lawyer and the first African American to serve as a U.S. Supreme Court justice, will receive one of the nation’s highest honors when the U.S. Postal Service issues a new commemorative postage stamp featuring his likeness.

The Thurgood Marshall commemorative stamp is the 26th stamp in the Black Heritage series, which began in 1978.

The first day of issue ceremony for the Thurgood Marshall stamp will take place on Jan. 7, 2003, at 10:30 a.m., at the Thurgood Marshall Federal Judiciary Building, One Columbus Circle NE. The event is free and open to the public. Entry to the event will be through the Massachusetts Avenue entrance. Sales of the stamp will take place at the event starting at 9:30 a.m. and at Washington D.C. post offices the same day. The stamps will be available at post offices across the country beginning Jan. 8.

“The Postal Service is proud to honor Thurgood Marshall’s life and historic accomplishments as part of this 26th edition to the Black Heritage stamp series,” said Postmaster General John E. Potter, who will dedicate the stamp.

“Through the issuance of the Thurgood Marshall stamp we have created a lasting tribute to one of the pioneers of civil rights and social equality in our country,” he said.

“Thurgood Marshall, who served as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States from October 1967 through June 1991, was a worthy and well-liked colleague,” said Chief Justice of the United States William H. Rehnquist.



“Honoring his memory with the issuance of a commemorative stamp is a fitting tribute to a man who left an indelible mark upon the law of his country,” said Rehnquist.

In addition to Rehnquist, also joining Potter at the historic event are Marshall’s wife, Cecilia Marshall; Ralph K. Winter, Judge for the Second Circuit, U.S. Court of Appeals, and Marshall’s first law clerk; William T. Coleman, attorney who worked with Marshall in the landmark “Brown v. Board of Education” case; Leonidas Ralph Mecham, Director, Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts; and the Howard University Choir.

Born in Baltimore, Md., on July 2, 1908, Marshall graduated in 1930 from Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, determined to become a lawyer. Later that year he entered Howard University Law School in Washington, D.C.

After graduating first in his law school class in 1933, Marshall opened a private practice in Baltimore. In 1938 Marshall was promoted to chief counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) legal office.

Marshall is one of the best known lawyers in the history of civil rights in America. He became the first director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc. (LDF) in 1940 and remained in that position for 21 years. In 1954 Marshall and his legal team prevailed in the landmark Supreme Court case, “Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas,” that struck down segregation in public schools.

Marshall made history again in 1967, when he was sworn in as the first African-American justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. His 24-year tenure was marked by his commitment to defending constitutional rights and affirmative action and by his strong opposition to the death penalty.

On Jan. 24, 1993, Marshall died in Bethesda, Md., at the age of 84. He was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom—our country’s highest civilian honor—on Nov. 30, 1993.

Marshall joins 25 other honorees in the Postal Service’s Black Heritage series, which salutes outstanding African-American activists, theorists, educators and leaders. Some other notable Americans in the series include: Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King, Jr., Roy Wilkins and Langston Hughes, who was honored in January 2002.

The Thurgood Marshall stamp was designed by Richard Sheaff of Scottsdale, Ariz., and is the eighth in the Black Heritage series to feature a photograph. The black-and-white photograph was taken by Abdou Daoud Ackad, Sr., in late 1967, shortly after Marshall became a justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Postal Service continues its commitment to honoring the historical achievements and contributions of African Americans through the popular and educationally important Black Heritage series.

To see the Thurgood Marshall stamp, visit the Postal Service Web site at www.usps.com, select "News and Events," click on "Philatelic News," then locate the online version of this news release.

Current U.S. stamps, as well as a free comprehensive catalog, are available toll free by calling 1 800 STAMP-24. In addition, a selection of stamps and other philatelic items are available at the Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that visits 137 million homes and businesses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of more than \$65 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume—some 207 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves 7 million customers each day at its 40,000 retail locations nationwide.

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