

Forum

Marshall Ranked 22nd On List Of Black Leaders

Can you name twenty one black Americans who have had a greater positive influence and effect on Black America than the late Thurgood Marshall? I know I cannot. I know also that the only black American whose positive influence exceeded that of Thurgood Marshall is Dr. Martin L. King Jr.



MINORITY REPORT

By JAMES E. ALSBROOK, Ph.D.

The issue of how influential various black leaders have been is presented in a new book that has not yet reached most of the book stores. This book is titled "The Black 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Afro-Americans Past and Present." The author is Columbus Salley, Ed. D., a Chicago-born, 49-year-old black educator who also wrote "The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History," "Your God Is Too White," and "Racism in America."

Salley's ranking are sure-fire fodder for hot conversations among Blacks at dinner parties, various meetings and in casual conversations. Some of those ranked above Marshall, who is 22nd on Salley's list, are significant persons who achieved fame but did not set in motion a whole chain reaction of new laws and concepts that call for equal educational opportunity, equal employment opportunity, equal housing opportunity, equal public accommodations and the numerous changes that have been made since the 1950s in the South, the border states and in some big northern cities.

Ranked above Marshall in Salley's book are:

1. Dr. Martin L. King, civil rights leader and theologian;
2. Frederick Douglass, anti-slavery orator and advocate-protester;
3. Booker T. Washington, educator, opinion leader, sociologist, historian, editor, teacher and writer;
5. Charles H. Houston, lawyer, civil rights advocate who taught Thurgood Marshall, NAACP attorney in many pre-1954 court victories;
6. Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, "founders of the first black support organization" and early church leaders (A.M.E. founders);
7. Prince Hall, "children's advocate," anti-slavery protest leader, and fra-

ternal order organizer among blacks; 8. Samuel D. Cornish and John Russwurm, anti-

slavery writers and founders of the first Black newspaper; 9. David Walker, author and abolitionist; 10. Nat Turner, slave revolt leader and hero; 11. James Forten, merchant who devised better methods of making and handling sails for ships, employed 40 to 50 men and made a fortune while protesting slavery; 12. Harriet Tubman "conductor" of the historically famous "Underground Railroad;" 13. Martin Delaney, black activist and political leader; 14. Henry H. Garnet, theologian-abolitionist; 15. Sojourner Truth, the women's suffragist leader and anti-slavery advocate; 16. Benjamin Banneker, the "activist-inventor" and "probably the best-known Negro in early United States history," astronomer, mathematician, and assistant surveyor of Washington, D.C.; 17. Crispus Attucks, Revolutionary War seaman and first killed in Boston Massacre; 18. Paul Lawrence Dunbar, novelist and poet who used "Negro dialect" and reinforced stereotypes but won approval of white people; 19. Phyllis Wheatley, Revolutionary war time poet and writer who corresponded with George Washington and other leaders; 20. P.B.S. Pinchback, Reconstruction U.S. senator from Mississippi; 21. Marcus Garvey, black nationalist leader and head of the "back-to-Africa movement" seventy-some years ago.

Thurgood Marshall is ranked No. 22 on the Salley list in his new book. The list is interesting and contains names of persons validly important in black history. But I do not think each of the above persons had an impact greater than that of Thurgood Marshall.

Marshall's legal talent tied with the emotional fervor and outrage provoked by Dr. King's marches, speeches and sufferings brought on a multitude of chain reactions, second only to the freeing of the slaves after the Civil War. The Civil Rights laws of the sixties and thereafter flow from legal precedents gained by Marshall.

The Living Legacy Of Marshall

Supreme Court justice, NAACP leader, freedom-fighting lawyer, social visionary, and strategic genius on civil rights, yet in life, Thurgood Marshall was even more than all of these accurate descriptions. He lived his entire life as a committed servant to the cause of equal justice and human dignity for all.



CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

By BENJAMIN F. CHAVIS, JR.

Keep in mind that during the 1940's and the 1950's it was not only unpopular but extremely

dangerous for an African American to give consistent public voice in opposition to American racism and exploitation. As millions of persons paid tributes to Marshall after his death, we believe it is fitting to remind especially our youth that the spirit and legacy of this great man must live on in how well and excellent we all continue the struggle for equal and empowerment.

Down in the deep South of the United States, as well as in other regions, there are many persons who still remember that the very name of Thurgood Marshall when spoken would invoke the notion of him being a modern "Moses." He was in fact a prophet who did not just make a forecast about the future but who seized the present moment for prophetic legal action making a critical difference in the nation social order.

In a sense, 1993 offers profound challenges to all of those who have inherited the societal contributions of Marshall and other freedom fighters. The question is will we let the memory of Justice Marshall disappear or fade away in the midst of new challenges surrounding the same old problems of racial discrimination and bigotry.

There could not be a better method of honoring the memory of Thurgood Marshall than picking up the baton of the ongoing Civil Rights Movement and making more progress for the cause of freedom and justice. In too many communities today there is the profound reality of hopelessness and despair because of the increasing racial and economic inequities throughout all aspects of society. In other

words, there are more reasons today which demand a revitalization of the "Movement" that Marshall dedicated his life and energy toward. Again, the question is will we rise to the occasion and continue to "fight the good

fight." As always, there are those who would attempt to mis-state the true legacy of Marshall. Revisionists by definition never stop attempting to tell another people's story their own reformulated way and thus distort the facts. One writer in a major national daily newspaper attempted to paint Marshall as an elitist who often criticized his contemporaries like Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X. But the truth is, Thurgood Marshall was a team player who knew the importance of the unity of the "Movement." Yes, different leaders have different assets and gifts. The key is to work together and to promote unity and the common good of justice and equitable economic empowerment.

The struggle that Thurgood Marshall led lives on and the issues of racial inequities today are more profound than was the case thirty years ago. Covert racism is more difficult to combat. Institutionalized racial discrimination sometimes will make the victims think that they are themselves the only reason why they are victimized. But we should not permit the 1990's to continue to be the decade of "blaming the victim for their victimization." The living legacy of Thurgood Marshall demands that the Civil Rights Movement return to an activist, proactive posture. There are literally millions of sisters and brothers who today should be rank and file members of a revitalized "freedom movement."

Thank God for the life of Thurgood Marshall and may we keep his legacy strong, viable and victorious.

Doonesbury

BY G.B. TRUDEAU

YOUR PARENTS CAME THROUGH, SAM! I'M NOW IN THE SOCIAL SECURITY LOOP! COOL, HUH?

YEAH!

WAIT'LL MY BABYSITTING BUDDIES HEAR THE NEWS! NO ONE'S GOING TO BELIEVE IT!

LISTEN UP, LADIES! GUESS WHO NOW HAS HIS VERY OWN SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER! TA-DA!

¿QUE? ¿QUE PASA?

OH... SORRY. JE SUIS KOSHER! ON-BOOK!

HEY, ZONK!

CORNELL! WHAT'S UP DUDE?

BOOPSIE SAID I MIGHT FIND YOU DOWN HERE...

YEAH, I'M OUT IN THE OPEN NOW! ON-BOOK! BY THE NUMBERS! COOL, HUH?

VERY. LISTEN, ZONK, I GOTTA ASK YOU SOMETHING.

SHOOT, MAN!

IT INVOLVES MARIJUANA...

THANKS, BUT I'M ON DUTY. I COULD LOSE MY SOCIAL SECURITY.

YOU'RE LOOKING FOR SOME GRASS? I THOUGHT YOU QUIT A WHILE BACK, CORNELL.

IT'S NOT FOR ME, MAN...

I BAKE IT INTO BROWNIES FOR SEVERELY ILL AIDS PATIENTS. THE MARIJUANA HELPS BLOCK THE SIDE EFFECTS OF CHEMOTHERAPY.

EVERY WEEK I MAKE A BIG BATCH WITH BETTY CROCKER BROWNIE MIX. BUT LAST WEEK MY SUPPLIER GOT BUSTED. I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU MIGHT KNOW SOMEONE ELSE.

UM... WELL, ZONK, TRY TO STAY WITH ME. THIS IS IMPORTANT.

HOW'S YOUR DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM WORK, CORNELL?

YUP AT LEAST I DID UNTIL I LOST MY SOURCE.

BUT ISN'T IT IL-LEGAL?

OF COURSE IT'S IL-LEGAL. BUT NOT TO HELP SUFFERING PEOPLE WOULD BE IMMORAL. SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO ANSWER TO A HIGHER LAW!

UM...

WHAT?

WELL, I DON'T MEAN TO BRAG, BUT I'VE ALWAYS ANSWERED TO A HIGHER LAW.

I KNOW YOU HAVE, MAN. THAT'S WHAT MADE ME THINK OF YOU!

HOW'S YOUR DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM WORK, CORNELL?

PRETTY SIMPLE. REALLY...

WORD'S GOTTEN AROUND, SO PEOPLE JUST CALL ME WHEN THEY START THEIR CHEMOTHERAPY...

EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT, I MAKE A FRESH BATCH OF BROWNIES, CUT THEM UP, WRAP THEM AND DELIVER THEM TO AIDS PATIENTS IN THEIR OWN HOMES.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT AIDS COOTIES?

YEAH, WHAT DO YOU DO-- LEAVE 'EM IN THE DRIVEWAY?

UM... NO. WHY?

SO ANYWAY, I MAKE MY ROUNDS, DROPPING OFF MARIJUANA BROWNIES, USUALLY STAYING TO TALK...

I'LL FIX TEA FOR THE GUYS, MAYBE SHARE A BROWNIE...

WAIT A MINUTE! YOU EAT THE BROWNIES, TOO?

UM... OCCASIONALLY. TO BE SOCIABLE.

ARE YOU CRAZY? AND YOU DO THIS EVERY WEEK?

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL, Z? A LITTLE GRASS NEVER...

NO, NO. THE CHOLESTEROL! THIS ISN'T THE '60S ANYMORE, CORNELL!



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