

# *The Thurgood Marshall Memorial* **Lawyers' Mall/State House Square** **State Circle**



Thurgood Marshall was one of this century's foremost leaders in the struggle for equal rights under the law. A native of Baltimore, Marshall graduated from Frederick Douglass High School in Baltimore and Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. He earned his law degree from Howard University in Washington, D.C. where he first met the great civil rights lawyer Charles Houston. After earning his law degree, Marshall returned to Baltimore and began his long association with the NAACP. In 1967, Marshall became the first African American to be appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Following Marshall's death in 1993, the state of Maryland decided to honor the great civil rights leader and jurist with a memorial at the State House in Annapolis. On May 17, 1994, exactly 40 years after the Supreme Court's *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka* decision, the governor of Maryland signed an Executive Order establishing the Thurgood Marshall Memorial Statue Commission. After a nationwide competition, the Commission awarded the design of the memorial to Maryland artist Toby Mendez.

Mr. Mendez's winning design includes an 8' statue of Thurgood Marshall as a young lawyer. Behind him are pillars with the inscription "Equal Justice Under Law" and facing him are two benches. On one of the benches is the figure of Donald Gaines Murray whose entrance into the

Law School of the University of Maryland marked Thurgood Marshall's first important victory in his struggle for school integration. On the other bench are the figures of two children representing Marshall's most important achievement, *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka et. al.*. Within the circle of the plaza is a chronology of the important events in Thurgood Marshall's long and distinguished career.

The placement of the Thurgood Marshall memorial on Lawyers' Mall, also known as State House Square, in Annapolis is especially appropriate, as it is on almost the exact spot where the Maryland Court of Appeals stood in 1935, when Marshall argued the Murray case before that court. Many of the arguments Marshall used in winning that case were later used by him in *Brown v. the Board of Education* and other integration cases.

The Thurgood Marshall Memorial was dedicated at a ceremony on October 22, 1996, attended by Governor Parris N. Glendening and Lt. Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, as well as Justice Marshall's widow, Cecilia, and other members of his family.

In 2005, BWI Airport was renamed Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport, as part of House Bill 189 signed into law by Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. In June 2006, the Thurgood Marshall Tribute, an exhibit about the life of Thurgood Marshall, was opened to the public in Terminal C of the airport. The tribute features a bust of Marshall by Toby Mendez, adapted from the original full-length statue in the Thurgood Marshall Memorial in Annapolis.