"The measure of a country's greatness is its ability to retain compassion in times of crisis." Thurgood Marshall was a very successful lawyer who had many great achievements that changed the world. He was born on July 2, 1902. His mom, Norma, was a kindergarten teacher, and his dad William was a steward at an exclusive club. His birth first name was Thoroughgood, but as a child Marshall got tired of having to write out such a long name. He shortened his name to Thurgood in the second grade.

In high school Thurgood memorized the entire United States Constitution. Though it helped him through his career, this was actually a teacher's punishment. He attended Howard University School of Law. He graduated first in his class in 1933, just as America was feeling the full impact of the Great Depression. Thurgood married a woman named Vivian Buster, who died early on. Thurgood then married Cecilia Suyat, and they had two sons, Thurgood Jr., and John Marshall.

Even though Thurgood was well qualified for Maryland Law school, he was denied an entry because of his race. In 1936, Thurgood and his mentor, Charles Houston, defended and won a case about an undergraduate named Donald Murray in a case like his own. Donald was also denied an entry into Maryland Law School for the same reasons. In 1941, Thurgood was allowed to help out in a very important case, but he was not allowed to speak a single word. Thurgood's first victory in front of the Supreme Court was when he defended four black men who were convicted due to confessions the police forced them to make.

One of his greatest achievements was when he successfully defended parents whose child was forced to go to black segregated schools. This was called the Brown vs. Board case in Topeka, Kansas. In 1967 Thurgood was appointed Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. He died on January 24, 1993. Over many decades Thurgood Marshall fought and won a variety of cases to end many forms of legal racism, inspiring the American Civil rights movement.