

TED SHAW NEWS BIO

Theodore M. Shaw's office at the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund Inc. has been described as having a framed handbill that his grandmother brought back from the 1963 March on Washington and a courtroom sketch of him arguing *Missouri v. Jenkins.*, a school desegregation case, before the U.S. Supreme Court more than 30 years later. More than just keepsakes, these relics are symbols of Ted Shaw's fight for the civil rights causes of his generation.

Shaw has taken a new step along his career path with his appointment to the Columbia Law School faculty as a professor of professional practice, teaching civil procedure and constitutional law.

During his 25-year tenure at the NAACP and Legal Defense and Education Fund Inc. (LDF), Shaw rose from director of the education docket in 1982 to director-counsel and president in 2004. During that time, he testified before Congress and before state legislatures, was a frequent guest on television and radio programs, published numerous articles, opened and headed an LDF office on the West Coast and lectured extensively on civil rights and human rights missions to Europe, South Africa, South America and Japan.

Shaw also argued a number of cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, including a landmark case as lead counsel representing African American and Latino students in the University of Michigan undergraduate affirmative action admissions case in 2003, *Gratz v. Bollinger*. The issue at stake was whether affirmative action programs in the nation's universities should remain in effect, or whether they should be abandoned.

"These represent the most significant civil right cases the Supreme Court will have decided in the last quarter century," Shaw told CNN. "This issue is nothing less than whether the doors of opportunity remain open for students of color."

Shaw began his work in civil rights after graduating from Columbia Law School in 1979. As a trial attorney in the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, he litigated civil rights cases throughout the country. After three years, however, he resigned in protest of Reagan Administration policies and joined LDF, directing the education docket and litigating school desegregation, capital punishment and other civil rights cases throughout the country. In 1987, he established LDF's Western Regional Office in Los Angeles and served as western regional counsel.

Three years later, he took a leave from the LDF to join the faculty of the University of Michigan Law School, where he taught constitutional law, civil procedure and civil rights. He returned to LDF in 1993 as associate director-counsel and in 2004 was named director-counsel, becoming the fifth person to lead the organization in its 64-year history.

Shaw's return to Columbia Law School is a homecoming. Not only is the School his alma mater, but he has been a Lecturer-in-Law and served on the Board of Visitors. He also has returned to campus to speak to students offered admission to Columbia Law School.

Shaw's work has garnered him a number of honors, including the Lawrence A. Wein Prize for Social Justice from Columbia Law School, the National Bar Association Young Lawyers Division's A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr. Memorial Award, and the Baldwin Medal, the highest honor given by the Wesleyan University alumni body. Shaw has served on the Board of Trustees of Wesleyan University, his undergraduate alma mater.

Under Shaw's leadership, the LDF has continued to fight for civil rights on a variety of fronts. In November 2007, for example, the organization filed an amicus brief in two cases before the U.S. Supreme Court concerning an Indiana law that requires all citizens to present valid, government issued photo identification when they appear at the polls to vote. The LDF brief argued that the law created substantial and unnecessary barriers to the vote.

Most recently, Shaw told an audience at the University of Iowa earlier this year, "We tell ourselves nowadays that we're color-blind. Color-blindness has been hijacked by the far right. When civil-rights advocates said that the goal was color-blindness, they didn't mean they wanted us to dig out our eyes and be blind to the significance of race."

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