



THURGOOD MARSHALL CLERKSHIP PROGRAM

Promoting diversity in the Maryland bar by providing legal employment and professional development opportunities to students from historically underrepresented groups who demonstrate exceptional leadership potential

It is incontrovertible that a superior legal practice requires the contribution of diverse talent, backgrounds, and experiences. And while we have made small gains in recent years, much more needs to be done to ensure that the membership of the Maryland bar reflects the rich diversity of the communities we serve. In 2013, in recognition of this goal, the Office of the Attorney General and leaders of several local law firms –Beveridge & Diamond, Gordon Fienblatt, Miles & Stockbridge, Saul Ewing, and Whiteford, Preston & Taylor—founded the Thurgood Marshall Clerkship Program. The Program, run collaboratively by the OAG and the law firm sponsors, provides first and second year law students the opportunity to serve an 8-week paid summer clerkship at the OAG’s downtown Baltimore office. In addition to being assigned to a unit within the OAG, clerks attend a variety of brown bag educational lunches and networking events with judges, legislators, policymakers and other legal practitioners hosted by the OAG and law firm sponsors. As a result, Thurgood Marshall clerks gain exposure to, and build relationships with, members of the public and private bar in a variety of different disciplines.

Since its inception, 44 students have participated in the Program, assisting the OAG in a broad range of complex legal work and advocacy including: antitrust, constitutional law, criminal prosecution and appeals, education, civil rights, and consumer protection. Thurgood Marshall clerks are racial/ethnic minorities, immigrants, people with disabilities, LGBTQ, and others who have faced social and/or economic disadvantages on their path toward the practice of law. They are both the academic stars of their classes and those whose academic performance does not accurately reflect their full employment and leadership potential. They are first generation law students, students with unique educational and family circumstances, and individuals who have overcome significant obstacles. They are exceptionally bright and committed to principles of equality and social justice. Since graduating the Program, Thurgood Marshall clerks have gone on to practice both public and private law, with several joining the firms of our sponsors.

“I will always be grateful the selection committee gave me the opportunity to participate in TMCP. The entire experience was amazing! I was blown away so many people were so genuinely interested in my success. Substantively, I developed my legal writing and analysis skills in an environment where it was okay to make mistakes and ask questions. I also found the soft skills and professional development training equally helpful. I really enjoyed the exposure to successful judges and attorneys practicing in the public and private sectors. It was incredible to encounter so many impressive figures in the legal community at various phases of their respective careers. Finally, and perhaps most important, the program granted access and exponentially accelerated the growth of an invaluable network of similarly minded, ambitious and dynamic peers.” **-Julien Barnes, The George Washington University Law School, TMCP Class of 2018**

“The Thurgood Marshall Clerkship Program gave me a wonderful opportunity to apply what I learned my first-year of law school in a practical manner. I did so while being guided by some of the most distinguished legal practitioners in Maryland. I received meaningful work on current legal issues, which helped sharpen my research and writing skills. Coming from a family without any lawyers, the brown-bag lunch activities allowed me to meet with lawyers, judges, politicians, and alumni of the program to ask both clarifying and personal questions on the field and their practices. Additionally, the ability to meet with partners and associates from the sponsoring firms taught me that there is a plethora of amazing ways to give back to the community, even if I am not at a public interest or non-profit law firm. I have gained mentors and increased my legal network tenfold. TMCP gave me a foundation to have a successful and thriving legal career, and I will forever be grateful!” **-Phylecia Fablaus, University of Baltimore School of Law, TMCP Class of 2019**

“The Thurgood Marshall Clerkship Program was essential to my current success as a law student. The program gave me the opportunity to gain experience within the Attorney General’s Office to see first-hand an attorney’s experience while working in a government entity and also introducing me to a variety of different law firms and practice groups that I had never been aware of. As a first generation law student navigating the proper career choices was a true obstacle; however, the program introduced me to attorneys who served as mentors that helped to open my eyes to all the opportunities available to me. The lessons and experience I gained as a Thurgood Marshall Law Clerk will continue to follow me throughout my career.” **-Alana Glover, University of Baltimore School of Law, TMCP Class of 2018**

“The Thurgood Marshall Clerkship Program has helped me to forge relationships with people who have shaped my career and given me guidance whenever I need it. Through it, I developed my practical legal skills, engaged with the foremost legal professionals in the state, and gained mentors to last a lifetime. It’s been four years since I clerked at the Maryland Office of the Attorney General and it still feels like home when I visit the office. The Program gives students a “best of both worlds” opportunity—exposing them to law in both the private and public sectors. That is hard to come by and one of the things I most appreciated.” **-Vanessa Destime, University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, TMCP Class of 2015**

