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Book Details

Showdown: Thurgood Marshall and the Supreme Court Nomination that Changed America by Wil Haygood.
www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/215001/showdown-by-wil-haygood

Available as an ebook and digital audiobook through the Ohio Digital Library: ohiodigitallibrary.com

Available through the State Library of Ohio Talking Book Program: www.klas.com/talkingbooks/ohio

About the Author

Born in Columbus and a graduate of Miami University (Ohio), Wil Haygood is now the Broadway Distinguished Scholar-in-Residence in the department of media, journalism, and film at Miami University. For nearly three decades he was a journalist, serving as a national and foreign correspondent at the Boston Globe, where he was a Pulitzer Prize finalist, and then at the Washington Post. He is the author of eight books including *The Butler: A Witness to History*, which was later adapted into the critically acclaimed film directed by Lee Daniels and starring Forest Whitaker and Oprah Winfrey.

Haygood has received a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship, and the 2017 Patrick Henry Fellowship Literary Award for his research on his 2018 book, *Tigerland*, a social history focused on the championship 1968-69 baseball and basketball Tigers of East High School in Columbus.

Author Resources

Wil Haygood biography on Miami University website
miamioh.edu/tigerland/haygood-bio

Author page on Penguin Random House website
www.penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/42228/wil-haygood

BookTV: Wil Haygood discusses Showdown (video)
www.c-span.org/video/?328367-1/wil-haygood-showdown
Video recording of Wil Haygood’s talk at the Lincoln Theatre in Columbus in September 2015, from CSPAN’s Book TV series. With an introduction from then-Mayor of Columbus Michael Coleman.

Writers LIVE: Wil Haygood, Showdown: Thurgood Marshall and the Supreme Court Nomination That Changed America
www.prattlibrary.org/booksmedia/podcasts/index.aspx?id=3912
Podcast featuring a 2015 talk by Haygood at the Enoch Pratt Free Library.

Q&A with Wil Haygood
An interview from Baltimore Magazine about researching and writing Showdown.

In Discussion with Wil Haygood: A Chronicle Witness to Race Relations in History
An interview from Houstonia Magazine.

For publicity and speaking engagement inquiries:
Contact Mandy Licata, Associate Publicist, Vintage & Anchor Books
mlicata@penguinrandomhouse.com
**Talk About It**
*Topics to share when discussing Showdown.*

- Wil Haygood weaves a lot of history and biography into a detailed report of the five days of hearings that led to Thurgood Marshall’s confirmation as the first African American Supreme Court justice. What do you think of the way Haygood chose to structure his book? How does it compare to a traditional biography?

- What do the brief anecdotes about Marshall’s youth in Baltimore and his time at Lincoln University reveal about his character, characteristics, and potential?

- Discuss the influence and impact that Howard Law School dean Charles Houston had upon Marshall. What opportunities did Houston provide? Do you think Marshall would have been as successful without Houston’s support?

- Haygood devotes chapters to several individuals whose stories intersect with Marshall’s but are largely peripheral to the Marshall confirmation hearings, including Judge J. Waties Waring, Justice Louis D. Brandeis, Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, and Harry and Harriette Moore. What do these profiles contribute to the overall narrative? Which of the individuals profiled in *Showdown* (including several members of the Senate Judiciary Committee) did you find most interesting, and why?


- How familiar were you with the Supreme Court confirmation process before reading *Showdown*? What did you learn? What else did this book teach you about American government and about U.S. history in the twentieth century?

- What current legal and social realities in the United States result directly from, or are related to, the work of Thurgood Marshall as an attorney, advocate, and later as a Supreme Court justice?

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**Go Further**
*Ideas for extending the experience of reading Showdown.*

Eighteen Supreme Court justices have been appointed since Thurgood Marshall. Recall the confirmation hearings of one or more of these justices, or look up accounts and analysis of the hearings using online resources available to all Ohio residents through Ohio Web Library ([ohioweblibrary.org](http://ohioweblibrary.org)). What similarities to and differences from the Thurgood Marshall confirmation hearing stand out to you? What, if any, aspects of Marshall’s confirmation hearing that were unprecedented at the time have become typical since?

By design, *Showdown* does not cover Thurgood Marshall’s career as a Supreme Court justice. A mere three pages are devoted to his twenty-four years on the Supreme Court. Check your local library for biographies of Marshall to learn more about his life, career, and impact on American society.

As an attorney for the NAACP, Marshall fought tirelessly against entrenched inequity, racial violence, and denial of rights to African Americans. The struggle for equity and justice is intrinsic to African American history. Visit the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati ([freedomcenter.org](http://freedomcenter.org)) or the National Afro-American Museum & Cultural Center in Wilberforce ([www.ohiohistory.org/visit/museum-and-site-locator/national-afro-american-museum](http://www.ohiohistory.org/visit/museum-and-site-locator/national-afro-american-museum)) to explore Ohio’s and the nation’s history through black American experience and achievement.
Explore More
Additional ideas and resources to use with Showdown.

President Johnson announces Thurgood Marshall nomination to the Supreme Court
[wapo.st/2xF2nyG]
Hear President Lyndon B. Johnson’s remarks upon appointing Thurgood Marshall to the
Supreme Court. Original audio from the June 13, 1967 press release is provided
by the Washington Post.

About Thurgood Marshall
[marshall.ucsd.edu/about-us/about-our-namesake.html]
This brief biography is featured on the website of Thurgood Marshall College at the
University of California San Diego. With a focus on diversity, equity, and social
responsibility, the college is dedicated to furthering the ideals of its namesake.

Thurgood Marshall portrait at the National Portrait Gallery
[www.si.edu/object/npg_NPG.67.43]
See a digital image of the portrait of Thurgood Marshall by artist Betsy Graves
Reyneau. The original painting is on display at the National Portrait Gallery in
Washington, DC.

National Museum of African American History and Culture
[nmaahc.si.edu]
Opened in 2016, this Smithsonian Institution museum is exclusively dedicated to the
documentation of African American life, history, and culture. If you can’t travel to
Washington, DC to visit the museum, explore the collection virtually using this online
search tool: nmaahc.si.edu/explore/collection.

Supreme Court Nominations Research Guide
[guides.ll.georgetown.edu/c.php?g=365722&p=2471070]
For a deep dive into the Supreme Court nomination and confirmation process,
consult this academic research guide provided by Georgetown University. This guide
explains the nomination process and suggests resources for further research into the
nominations of more recently confirmed Supreme Court justices.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
[www.naacp.org]
Thurgood Marshall worked as an attorney for the NAACP and founded its Legal
Defense Fund. Learn about the current work of this organization that advocates for
the promotion of civil rights and the elimination of race-based discrimination.

Freedom Never Dies: The Legacy of Harry T. Moore
[www.pbs.org/harrymoore/harry/mbio.html]
This 2001 PBS documentary explores the work and legacy of civil rights leader Moore,
whose home was bombed by the Ku Klux Klan on Christmas 1951, an incident also
described in Showdown. The companion site includes video interviews, an
interactive timeline, a biography, primary source documents, discussion questions,
and more.

Robert Caro
[www.robertcaro.com]
Journalist and author Caro has published four volumes of a projected five-book
biographical series about President Lyndon B. Johnson.

This toolkit revised July 2019.