



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 Feinblatt, 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 down-town 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, 68 students have participated in the Program, assisting the OAG in a broad range of complex legal work and advocacy including: antitrust, independent investigations, 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.

"The Thurgood Marshall Clerkship Program not only helped me build upon invaluable legal skills but gave me confidence in my decision to pursue a legal career. Through programming, I was connected with judges, attorneys, and politicians from various sectors of the legal field, all of whom provided valuable advice that I carry to this day. As a first-generation college graduate and law student, navigating the legal field was challenging. However, this program gave me the necessary tools to enter spaces that I was not accustomed to. Furthermore, this program allowed me to connect with other first-generation law students from varying backgrounds. The connections I made during my summer clerkship are connections I continue to maintain today. I highly recommend all students apply to this program. I could not have asked for a better 1L summer, and I will be forever grateful to the Thurgood Marshall Clerkship Program."

Sharon Kimemia, University of Baltimore School of Law, TMCP Class of 2022.

"I thoroughly enjoyed my experience during the Thurgood Marshall Clerkship program. As a first-generation law student, I did not have the privilege of having a network of attorneys. Through this program, I was able to build connections with attorneys working in diverse practices. My network now consists of judges and attorneys in both government and private sectors! TMCP has given me the exposure I need to help steer me in the direction of law I want to practice after graduation. Additionally, the advice I received on how to overcome challenges as a minority is something I will always hold close to me. For someone who dealt with the Imposter Syndrome, such advice gave me so much hope that I can be a great attorney. The experience I gained as a Thurgood Marshall Law Clerk is invaluable and I am so blessed to have been a part of such an amazing opportunity!"

Adeiy Samura, University of Baltimore School of Law, TMCP Class of 2022

"The Thurgood Marshall Clerkship Program was the best experience I could have had during my first summer as a law student! The program exposed me to various practice areas, encouraged me to step outside of my comfort zone to network with local professionals, and honed my writing skills to prepare me for the rest of law school. Further, I was able to explore opportunities on both the private and public side. As a 1L, this aspect of the program was invaluable because it helped me identify my interests as I moved into my 2L year. Lastly, as a first-generation law student and a child of immigrants, this program made me feel valued and seen by the Maryland Office of the Attorney General. The Office's investment in my development was especially encouraging, and I hope all students are able to take advantage of such an amazing program!"

Tram-Anh (Annie) Tran, University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, TMCP Class of 2022

"I cannot think of a better opportunity for first-generation law students to gain substantive insight to the realities of both government and industry lawyering. The Thurgood Marshall Clerkship Program will expose you to a vast array of legal practices through your assignments with the Attorney General's Office, revered law firms in Baltimore, and your fellow clerks. Through the Program, I was able to combine my passion for community service and police reform with an emerging area of law in police oversight. I used the experiences and skills I fostered with the TMCP to complete a clerkship with another police oversight agency last summer as well. Upon graduation, I aspire to pursue a career in police oversight, an area of law that I did not know existed until I participated in the Thurgood Marshall Clerkship Program."

J. Salvador Icaza V, University of Maryland, Baltimore Francis King Carey School of Law, TMCP Class of 2022

