

## Donald G. Murray and the University of Maryland Law School

In the years 1935–1936, Donald G. Murray, with Thurgood Marshall, William I. Gosnell and Charles H. Houston as counsel, sued Raymond A. Pearson, President of the University of Maryland, and nine other University of Maryland personnel for denying Murray the right to apply to the University of Maryland Law School.

Murray, a graduate of Amherst College, requested application to the law school on December 8, 1934 but was denied consideration by President Pearson (letter to Donald G. Murray, December 14, 1934) on the grounds that Maryland law maintained the Princess Anne Academy as a separate institution of higher learning for the education of Negroes. Murray was further informed that equality of opportunity for all citizens of Maryland was insured by Chapter 234 of the Maryland Legislature which created partial scholarships at Morgan College or institutions outside of the State for Negro students who may desire to take professional courses or other work not given at the Princess Anne Academy.

In March of 1935, Murray responded to President Pearson's letter stating:

*I am a citizen of the State of Maryland and fully qualified to become a student of the University of Maryland Law School. No other State institution affords a legal education. The arbitrary actions of the officials*

*of the University of Maryland in returning my application was unjust and unreasonable and contrary to the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution and laws of this State. I, therefore, appeal to you as the governing body of the University to accept the enclosed application and money order and have my qualifications investigated within a reasonable time. After finding that I am qualified you are further requested to admit me as a regular student of the University of Maryland Law School. I am ready, willing and able to meet all requirements as a student, to pay whatever dues are required of residents of the State and to apply myself diligently to my work.*

Murray was then informed by President Pearson, in a letter of March 8, 1935, that his application was still being denied, that Howard University in Washington, D.C. was an excellent law school that admitted Negroes, and that the fees at Howard were less than those at the University of Maryland.

After receipt of Pearson's letter, Murray filed petition against the University of Maryland on April 18, 1935. The case, Murray v. Pearson, tried in the Maryland Court, resulted in the integration of the University of Maryland Law School.



Thurgood Marshall, Donald G. Murray and Dr. Charles Houston (chief counsel for the NAACP). Courtesy of the Library of Congress. MSA SC 1796-A-224.