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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CHRIS CROWE is the author of *Mississippi Trial 1955*, winner of the Jefferson Cup and the IRA Young Adult Book Award, and *Getting Away with Murder, the True Story of the Emmett Till Case*, an ALA Best Book for Young Adults and a Jane Addams Children's Book Award Honor Book. He is a professor of English at Brigham Young University, close to his home in Provo, Utah. He and his wife, Elizabeth, have four grown children and one granddaughter. For more information about Chris Crowe and his books, please visit www.chriscrowe.com.



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UPclose: THURGOOD MARSHALL JUSTICE

a twentieth-century life by **CHRIS CROWE**

While reading *Up Close: Thurgood Marshall*, ask your students to think about the following questions. Answers can either be written individually or discussed in groups to make for an interesting and thought-provoking classroom conversation.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- In the introduction, what does the author call the “Goliath of racism”? What does he mean by this term?
 - Why was the practice of slavery accepted in the American colonies? What do you think of these reasons?
 - What changes in the 1860s suggested that more rights and protections might be offered to African Americans? Why didn’t these work?
 - In chapter two, the author talks about the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. What was the NAACP, and why was it formed?
 - What types of lessons and values did Thurgood Marshall learn from members of his family? List at least three examples.
 - What was it about Buster that made her a good match for Thurgood? What important influence did she have on him?
 - In chapter six, Thurgood and Buster “decided that he should become a lawyer.” Name some of the reasons that contributed to Marshall’s decision to choose this career. Which do you think was most influential, and why?
 - What problems did Marshall have in his first year as a lawyer?
 - Many African Americans saw a “flicker of hope” after the University of Maryland case, as described in chapter seven. Why was that court decision so encouraging?
 - What was Marshall’s big career break? In what ways did this benefit him?
 - Why was the Lyons case so important to Marshall?
 - In chapter nine, the author states that Buster feared for her husband’s safety. Why? What safety precautions did he take?
 - What four resources kept Marshall strong in his fight against racism?
 - What was Marshall’s strategy for attacking inequality in the public school system?
- What did Dr. Clark’s test with the different dolls demonstrate? How did this help Marshall?
 - What aspect of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision was most satisfying to Marshall? Why?
 - In what ways did Thurgood Marshall and Martin Luther King, Jr. disagree on methods of protest?
 - When questioned by reporters, Marshall was not able to express how he felt about his nomination to the Supreme Court. How do *you* think he felt at that moment?
 - What happened when the Supreme Court turned from being a liberal majority to a conservative one?
 - What recent signs suggest that race issues are not completely resolved in America? Do you know of any current event stories beyond those listed in the text that illustrate this point?

CRITICAL THINKING

- What did Marshall mean when he called himself a “symbol” to the southern senators who tried to block his appointment to the appeals court? One of the defining aspects of a “symbol” is that it can be interpreted to have different meanings to different people. Think of a few groups (other lawyers or people from Marshall’s original hometown, for example) in America at that time who might have viewed Thurgood Marshall as a symbolic figure. What would he mean to each? What does he mean to us today?
- What does it mean to call the United States Constitution a “living” document? Do you think this is a positive or negative characteristic of the document? Why?
- In chapter 14, the author recounts the answer Marshall gave when asked which case was most important to him. Based on your reading of *Up Close: Thurgood Marshall*, which do you think was his most significant case? What makes it so? Do you consider this case Marshall’s greatest achievement, or is there another aspect of his life that stands out to you, and why?