

For Immediate Release
Thursday, April 21, 2022

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LDF Announces Second Cohort of the Groundbreaking Marshall-Motley Scholars Program

April 21, 2022 - Today, the [NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.](#) (LDF) announced its second 10-person cohort (bios below) of the [Marshall-Motley Scholars Program](#) (MMSP). Launched in January 2021, LDF's groundbreaking pipeline program will endow the South with the next generation of civil rights lawyers trained to provide legal advocacy of unparalleled excellence in the pursuit of racial justice.

In exchange for a full law school scholarship and professional development, scholars commit to devoting the first eight years of their career to practicing civil rights law in service of Black communities in the South. The program is named in honor of Supreme Court Justice, legendary civil rights attorney and LDF founder Thurgood Marshall, and iconic civil rights litigator, former LDF attorney, and the first Black woman to serve as a federal judge, Constance Baker Motley.

The 2022 Marshall-Motley Scholars and their respective hometowns are as follows:

- **Adom Abatkun**, *Atlanta, Georgia*
- **Danyelle Honoré**, *Portsmouth, Virginia*
- **Sophia Howard**, *Nashville, Tennessee*
- **Arielle Hudson**, *Tunica, Mississippi*
- **Nastassia Janvier**, *Miami, Florida*
- **Carson Malbrough**, *Los Angeles, California*
- **Malik Moore**, *Gallion, Alabama*
- **Nathan Poland**, *Rockville, Maryland*
- **Carlos Pollard Jr.**, *LaPlace, Louisiana*
- **Justyce Yuille**, *Little Rock, Arkansas*

“We are proud to welcome 10 more driven, passionate future civil rights attorneys to the Marshall-Motley Scholars Program and to the Legal Defense Fund family. We were deeply impressed by their experience and connection to the mission of protecting and expanding the rights of Black communities across the South in the face of a new generation of assaults,” **said LDF President and Director-Counsel Janai S. Nelson**. “Through this program, we have been introduced to brilliant and committed students with powerful stories about their motivations to advance racial justice. We look forward to equipping them with all the requisite tools needed to maximize the impact they can have on Black

communities and equity in our nation through the legal system — precisely what LDF was founded to help bring about.”

The 2022 cohort of Marshall-Motley Scholars brings significant professional experience with some of the most influential organizations and leaders in the nation. Members of the cohort have worked with Stacey Abrams’s Georgia gubernatorial campaign, former Senator Barbara Boxer, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, The Bronx Defenders and more. They have served as NAACP university chapter presidents and vice presidents, student government association chief justices and senators, founders of nonprofits and organizations that seek to improve the lives of incarcerated individuals and their families and have earned distinctions as Rhodes and Truman Scholars. Bios for the 10 scholars can be found below.

“Achieving racial justice in the South is, and always will be, at the heart of LDF’s mission. We could not be happier to continue to help ensure the future of legal activism in the region with another impressive cohort,” said **Jino Ray, LDF’s Director of the Marshall-Motley Scholars Program**. “The Scholars’ collective desire and drive to join the fight for racial equity for both present and future generations speaks volumes of their character, and we cannot wait to see what they achieve in their respective careers as civil rights attorneys.”

Over the next four years, LDF’s MMSP will continue to invest in the education and training of aspiring civil rights attorneys to advocate on behalf of Black communities in the South seeking racial justice and equity. Scholars will be afforded a full law school scholarships for tuition, room and board and incidentals to alleviate the debt burden that can prevent future lawyers from pursuing a career as a civil rights attorney; summer internships with national and regional civil rights organizations with offices in the South focused on racial justice to jumpstart training in civil rights law; a two-year postgraduate fellowship at civil rights law organizations in the South fighting to achieve racial justice; and access to special training sponsored by LDF.

Black students continue to face more barriers than ever to attend law school. Studies show that the cost of a private law school education has grown by a whopping 175% since 1985. According to the American Bar Association, student loans take a disproportionate toll on lawyers of color, often forcing them to take unwanted career paths. The support offered by the MMSP is an intentional effort to address the racial and economic barriers that often deter students from pursuing their dreams of becoming civil rights attorneys, and a targeted effort to support the civil rights ecosystem in the South.

Biographies for 2022 MMSP Cohort

Scholar Name: Adom Abatkun

Adom Abatkun is a Georgia native who graduated from Georgia Southern University, where she studied criminal justice and criminology. Adom's interest in civil rights law comes from her background as an Ethiopian American in the South and understanding of the impact race had on her way of life.

Adom served as a legal intern with the Ogeechee Judicial Circuit Public Defender's Office in Statesboro, Georgia where she assisted counsel with trial preparations for felony and misdemeanor cases and also traveled to local jails and juvenile detention centers to interview clients. As an investigative intern at Georgetown University Law Center, Criminal Defense & Prisoner Advocacy Clinic, Adom aided attorneys with pre-trial preparations and helped clients reintegrate into society after being released from custody. Adom currently works as a Prisoner Rights Paralegal at Florida Legal Services in Gainesville, Florida where she co-leads the anti-racism initiative within the prisoner litigation partnership with the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Florida Justice Institute.

Adom plans to use her law degree to continue working to combat the cycle of oppression that occurs in the South while shattering deep-rooted racism and advocating for the humanization of incarcerated people.

Scholar Name: Danyelle Honoré

Danyelle Honoré, a Virginia native, graduated from the University of Virginia with a Bachelor of Arts in African American & African Studies and furthered her education at Harvard University with a Master of Education in Education Policy & Management. Her dedication to civil rights law stems from her lived experience with racial justice and her passion for serving her community.

Over the course of three summers, Danyelle worked as a summer paralegal at Access Law Group where she drafted legal memos and prepared materials for trial and settlement. Additionally, she worked as a post-secondary enrollment associate at American Student Assistance where she provided necessary information and assistance to students applying for post-secondary programs. Currently, Danyelle is the founder and chief executive officer of Honoré Foundation where she oversees service projects such as Thanksgiving meals for the homeless, Christmas coat drives and scholarships for at-risk youth. Danyelle is also the juvenile justice fellow for the U.S. House of Representatives where she leads the juvenile justice portfolio and develops priorities for the Committee on Education and Labor.

Through civil rights law, Danyelle is dedicated to confronting racism in the South and developing class-action lawsuits against the state for discriminatory school funding formulas.

Scholar Name: Sophia Howard

Sophia Howard, born in Lexington, Kentucky, and raised in Nashville, Tennessee, earned her Bachelor of Arts in philosophy and comparative women's studies, with a concentration in women and resistance movements this past May from Spelman College. Her dedication to fighting for civil rights comes from her desire to want to give back and fight for those who always encouraged her to have something to say as a Southern Black woman.

During her time at Spelman, Sophia worked with several Southern racial justice efforts, political and judicial campaigns, and initiatives, including the Stacey Abrams gubernatorial campaign, Equal Justice Initiative, ACLU of Georgia, The Law Firm of Lawanda Hodges, RestoreHER and many more. Sophia is also the founder of the Unlocked Minds Book Club, a student-led prison education program at Whitworth Women's Prison in Hartwell, Georgia. This past August, she helped found Village Kulture, a non-profit organization that provides mentoring services to young Black boys.

Sophia knows her journey to become a civil rights lawyer will be long and arduous but views her commitment to over a decade of education as a small sacrifice in what she knows will be a long career of fighting and protecting people of color in the South.

Scholar Name: Arielle Hudson

Arielle Hudson, of Tunica, Mississippi, graduated from The University of Mississippi with a Bachelor of Arts in secondary education and is on track to graduate from the University of Oxford in June 2022 with a Bachelor of Arts in jurisprudence. Arielle's understanding of racial injustice came at an early age from her experience with racial segregation in Mississippi public schools and her stepfather's incarceration.

Because of her experiences in the Mississippi school system, Arielle developed her personal literacy education platform, Literacy Lets Individuals Gain Height to Success (L.I.G.H.T.S) to combat childhood illiteracy rates in Mississippi through service projects and educational workshops. At the University of Mississippi, Arielle served as the President of the Black Student Union and became the first Black woman from the institution to become a Rhodes Scholar. She co-led a campus wide movement that resulted in the relocation of a Confederate statue and sparked state-wide advocacy for removal of Confederate iconography. She currently serves as the president of the Black Association of Rhodes Scholars.

Arielle believes in the power of movement lawyering and hopes to work alongside organizations and organizers fighting for radical social change with her legal expertise. This includes using the law to advance the task of liberation for Black people through education equity and voting and criminal legal reform. She is committed to practicing civil rights law and pursuing racial justice liberation for Black people in the South.

Scholar Name: Nastassia Janvier

Nastassia Janvier, a Miami, Florida native, graduated from Florida State University with a Bachelor of Science in interdisciplinary social science in sociology and public administration and is on track to receive her Master of Science in Public Administration in May of 2022. Nastassia's commitment to civil rights law stems from her childhood experiences where she witnessed the impact that law, education, and government can have in achieving racial equity in the South.

Nastassia served as the president of the NAACP Tallahassee Chapter where she presided and chaired all meetings of the college chapter and oversaw the 15 executive committees. She currently serves as the student body president of Florida State University, as well as chairwoman of the Florida Student Association. She works as a graduate assistant in the College of Social Science and Public Policy where she coordinates and formulates sponsorship opportunities with Florida State alumni.

Additionally, Nastassia is a member of the Florida State University Board of Trustees and is a governor on the Board of Governors for the State University System of Florida which oversees the operation and management of the Florida Public University System's 12 institutions.

With her law degree, Nastassia will center her advocacy in the South because the consequences of modern-day slavery impact those she is connected to. She aims to provide legal counsel, representation, and training to those whose civil rights have been violated.

Scholar Name: Carson Malbrough

Carson Malbrough is a Los Angeles, California native who studied at Occidental College where he received a Bachelor of Arts in politics. His passion for civil rights work stems from his awareness of police brutality, criminalization and mass incarceration and discrimination from his familial roots.

Carson worked as a campaign manager for Melissa Fox for State Assembly where he provided administrative work around the campaign, as well as planning and execution. As a legislative campaign organizer for the Grassroots Law Project (GLP), Carson managed several advocacy campaigns in support of the GLP's policy priorities, focusing on discriminatory policing in schools and ending mass incarceration. Currently, Carson is a campaign associate at Voting Rights Lab where he works to develop campaign strategies.

Carson has dedicated his future work to advocating for racial justice. He hopes to work against the ongoing voter suppression and efforts to silence Black voices across the South.

Scholar Name: Malik Moore

Malik Moore of Gallion, Alabama, attended Troy University, receiving a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration with a concentration in legal studies. Malik's dream of combating racial justice comes from personal and external experiences growing up as a Black man in the rural South.

While at Troy University, Malik was a student advisor of the University Activities Council, a member of Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity, and a member of 101 Elite Men where he promoted a positive image for African American males. Additionally, Malik worked as a legal assistant at Gibbs & Sellers Law Firm, and currently works as a Legal Assistant for Ashley Mallory Attorney at Law where he assists a legal professional and organizes case files.

Frederick's journey into civil rights law is fueled by his dedication to fight for the rights of all people regardless of race, religion, or gender, and to fight for those who have been wrongfully accused.

Scholar Name: Nathan Poland

Nathan Poland of Rockville, Maryland, graduated from Princeton University in 2020, earning a Bachelor of Arts in African American Studies with a minor in statistics, machine learning and Latin American studies. Nathan's drive to become a racial justice lawyer comes through his desire to defend and protect Southern communities from the harsh realities of racial oppression.

Nathan gained valuable experience working at multiple racial justice organizations, such as Bronx Defenders, Vera Institute of Justice, Ida B. Wells Just Data Lab and the Rockefeller Foundation. Since April 2021, he has worked as a project manager at Civil Rights Corps to grow the field of police abuse litigation in Houston, Texas and Washington, the District of Columbia. As part of this work, he has interviewed survivors of police violence, transcribed admissible statements and managed relationships with clients and their loved ones.

By working in partnership with, rather than on behalf of, Black people in the South, Nathan is committed to racial justice and movement lawyering because he believes the key to addressing the marginalization, disenfranchisement and oppression Black communities face is radically understanding the systems that perpetuate racial violence well enough to make them do something they were not meant to do—empower Black communities.

Scholar Name: Carlos Pollard, Jr.

Carlos Pollard, Jr. is from LaPlace, Louisiana, and graduated from Dillard University with a Bachelor of Arts in criminal justice. Carlos's commitment to advocating for his community comes from his experience as a man of color from Louisiana.

During his time at Dillard University, Carlos worked with the Mayor of New Orleans, Non-Profit Action New Orleans, and other campaigns in the city to work on combating social injustices in the South. Currently, Carlos works with multiple non-profit organizations such as Power Coalition for Equity and Justice, Together Louisiana's Vaccine Equity Project, and Center for Racial Justice and Public Allies where he is part of the 2021-2022 cohort completing a fellowship at Southeast Louisiana Legal Services in the mortgage assistance program.

Carlos's enthusiasm for civil rights is rooted in his focus on bettering his community. He strives to use his law degree to amplify his efforts to fight for real justice and make a substantial change in a system that consistently fails people of color.

Scholar Name: Justyce Yuille

Justyce Yuille, from Little Rock, Arkansas, graduated from the University of Arkansas with a Bachelor of Arts in political science, criminal justice, and African and African American studies as well as a minor in legal studies. Her devotion to racial justice is rooted in her belief that African Americans are significant community members of the South where they have been subjected to discrimination and racism.

Justyce served as the first vice president of the University of Arkansas Chapter of the NAACP, as well as the first African American chief justice in history at the University of Arkansas Associated Student Government. She was also an intern for the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and a research intern at the Woman's National Democratic Club Educational Foundation. Justyce held the role of a teaching fellow for AmeriCorps for Great Oaks Charter School where she tutored 125 students in English and social studies. Currently, she holds the role of research and communication intern for Issue One, where she briefs Supreme Court oral arguments and discussions around *FEC v. Cruz* for Senate, as well as an intern for the campaign of Nate Fleming for District of Columbia Council At-Large.

Due to her own experiences of discrimination and racial profiling, Justyce is committed to advocating for racial justice and combating systematic racism to strengthen and improve the lives of Black people in the South.

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization. LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since

1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Follow LDF on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.