SHOWDOWN

Discussion Guide

1. What do you feel was the author's aim in writing this book?

2. Why do you think Loyola chose this book?

3. What effect did Thurgood Marshall's Baltimore upbringing have on his life?

4. The book is presented in a non-linear and non-traditional fashion, with multiple flashbacks, and all shaped around the five-day hearings. Was this approach easy to follow?

5. What surprised you about the book?

6. Why do you think Thurgood Marshall kept risking his life for equal rights and justice in America?

7. Would Marshall pass the hearings easily today? Why or why not?

8. Why were the southern senators on the Senate Judiciary Committee so opposed to Thurgood Marshall?

9. Why was Thurgood Marshall so insistent that the NAACP Legal Defense Fund remain separate from the NAACP itself?

10. Why was Judge J. Waties Waring so important to the Brown v. Board of Education school desegregation case?

11. Why were supporters of equal rights for black Americans so alarmed by the Plessy v. Ferguson Supreme Court decision?
12. Why is race such a flash point in our nation?

13. Has this book increased your desire to read more about this time period in American history?

14. With all of the problems of the nation swirling around him in 1967 - riots, urban unrest, the Vietnam War - why do you think President Johnson felt it was so important to integrate the United States Supreme Court?

15. Why do you think Thurgood Marshall disagreed with Martin Luther King Jr.'s strategy to use children in the civil rights marches?

16. How has Thurgood Marshall's legal victories affected YOUR life?

17. Did the U.S. Constitution change Thurgood Marshall's life? Or did he change the U.S. Constitution?

18. Do you see parallels between Thurgood Marshall's fight for justice and the court battles around equal rights for women, minorities and the disabled that are evident in the news of today?

19. Has SHOWDOWN changed the way you think about America? If so, how?

20. Considering the issues that Marshall confronted, in what ways have we made progress – or not?

21. How do themes presented in this text relate to your planned major and educational interest?

22. How can Loyola help to further the conversation that Showdown has helped to begin?