



Marshall-Motley Scholarship Program 2024

Video Transcript

[upbeat music]

Voiceover: LawHub.

Narrator: In the civil rights movement's earliest days, Thurgood Marshall formed the NAACP Legal Defense Fund for over 80 years in courtrooms across the country. Our attorneys have relentlessly fought for the rights we have today. Having those rights, keeping those rights that belong to every American takes work commitment, it is indeed a calling at a time when those rights are more threatened than ever. Our work matters more than ever. That's why today we are honored to introduce the very first Marshall-Motley Scholars named for our founder, Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall and the iconic litigator Judge Constance Baker Motley. Motley Scholars are from different backgrounds, yet share the same commitment to uphold, maintain, and protect our civil rights, to answer the call and bring an end to racial injustice.

Racial justice and choice field lives are not mutually exclusive. As long as I live, I live to fight for freedom. Racial justice and education is when black students are provided with equitable access to quality public education. In every space, my mission is also to connect with people in ways that ultimately create more just and inclusive communities. Since the age of 11, I have been committed to fighting for equality and justice in the South. In this society, poverty should not be criminalized. I am in the fight for racial justice on behalf of black people.

Hope to be a leader that is a connector between coalitions and builds efficacy and communities by using the law to fuel material change that is larger than me or what any one individual can do. I intend to offer my voice visibility and assure the experiences of my community. It's about changing the narrative and the dynamic and the systemic outlook for African-Americans. Good evening. How are you, Ashley?

Hi. Doing well. How are you all

Doing wonderful. Doing wonderful. Good to see you.

We really recognize how rigorous this process was and it's one of the reasons why we wanted to just be able to talk to finalists personally. But I also wanted to reach out because I wanted to congratulate you on having been selected as a Marshall-Motley Scholar. I'm not crying, I'm not crying. You're crying for having been selected as a Marshall-Motley.

I was sitting here, I was like, she tell me I didn't get it the way Sheryl and Eiffel. Oh, hey there. How you doing? How are you? You can unmute. Unmute yourself. You can unmute yourself now.

Thank you. That's really awesome news. Especially two days before my graduation session. Yes, I would think. I would think. I can't wait to get to work for the Marshall-Motley Scholars Program and it's just an honor to be a part of the inaugural cohort.

Congratulations, Marshall-Motley Scholars. Now let's get to work.

Angela Winfield: Welcome and thank you everyone for joining us today. My name is Angela Winfield. I am vice president and Chief Diversity Officer here at Law School Admission Council LSAC. And it's my pleasure to welcome you. I want to start by wishing those of you celebrating a very happy Dally. I wish you health, prosperity and joy to you and your family on this holiday. And I also want to wish you all a happy Halloween. So today's webinar, I am delighted to be able to highlight a wonderful program put on by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. It's the Marshall-Motley Scholar Program and today I am so pleased to be joined by some very special guests. We have Christina Hayes, who is the coordinator for the

Marshall-Motley Scholar Program, and we also have two actual participants and two scholars in the program. We will be joined by them later, Sondos Moursy and Nathan Poland.

Before we get into the content, I do want to go through some of the logistics for today and our plan. So we will be sharing with you more information about the Marshall-Motley Scholars Program including application details, application components, and going through some questions. And we're going to leave time at the end of today for you to ask those questions. You can feel free to use the q and a feature to submit those questions at any time during the webinar. And we've got folks from the Marshall-Motley's team and LSAC behind the scenes answering those questions for you. And if we see commonly asked questions, we'll save those and answer them live during the webinar at the end. So just as a reminder, if you have questions, use that q and a feature. So now I want to go ahead and dive in and start talking with some of our special guests. So Christina Hayes is the manager and coordinator of the Marshall-Motley's program. Christina, will you join me and please say hello to our webinar participants today.

Christina Hayes: Hello everyone. Thank you so much for logging on today. We're excited for this application cycle and thank you Angela and to the wonderful team at Isac.

Angela Winfield: It's our pleasure. This is such an incredible program that I love doing this with you all every year. So let's start with the organization itself. Can you tell us a little bit about the NAACP Legal Defense Fund? What is it for those of us that may not have heard of the Legal Defense Fund?

Christina Hayes: Wonderful. So I will start by saying the NAACP Legal Defense Fund is a separate entity from the naacp. A lot of people get them confused and we were founded by Thurgood Marshall who was this country's very first Supreme Court, black Supreme Court justice, and really the focus of LDF as we call it is racial justice. Its equality and really working to achieve an inclusive society. So from media and communications to organizing and litigation policy, LDF is constantly working to move the needle forward for a racially just and inclusive society.

Angela Winfield: Wonderful, thank you. And now let's talk a little bit about the Marshall-Motley Scholars program itself. We saw that beautiful video. It gets me every time, every year, but can you tell us a little bit more about it? What does the program do? What does it mean to be a Marshall-Motley scholar?

Christina Hayes: Wow. Well, the program is really, I've been telling people on the road it's a unicorn in the scholarship space and it's really a once in a lifetime opportunity if you're someone who has a heart for racial justice and for practicing law. As you saw in the video, we were named after Thurgood Marshall and Constance Speaker Motley, a civil rights leader in her own right and the program has a mission that is equally simple and yet very ambitious and that is to raise up the next generation of civil rights attorneys who will advocate for black communities in the South. So it is racial justice centered and it is southern focused. The program is a 13 year commitment, and when you hear us use that phrase demonstrated commitment, we sound like a broken record, but that's why because it's 13 years, that's three years for law school, a two year postgraduate fellowship and eight years of practice.

So the scholar, the program invests in the scholars through funding that law school education. That means your tuition, your cost of attendance, room and board and housing your relocation for your one L year because you're able to go to any a approved law school in the country, a reasonable amount for incidentals, paid bar prep support, paid summer internships after your one L and two L year, and then that paid two year fellowship as well. And then after that period, scholars commit to the mission of the program and carrying out that mission through advocating for black communities.

Angela Winfield: That is fantastic. Yes, it sounds like a holistic program that invests, like you said in the scholars, but also the mission of creating more equality and equity and advancing civil rights for all of America. All right, so that's a little bit about the program. I want to go ahead and invite our scholars on Nathan Poland and Sondos Moursy, will you please join me? Welcome. I want to start with some introductions just so that we get a little bit more information about who you are and where you are on your journey. So I'd love to know where are you on the Marshall Martley Scholar program journey? What year are you in law school? Tell us a little bit about your background. Let's start with you Sondos.

Sondos Moursy: I am so excited to be here. My name is Sondos and I grew up in Lafayette, Louisiana. I'm in cohort three of the Marshall-Motley Scholars Program, which means I'm in my second year of law school and I attend law school at UT Law in Austin.

Angela Winfield: Wonderful, thanks so much. I was just in Austin and Nathan, how about you? What, give us a little background on yourself.

Nathan Poland: Absolutely. Thank you so much for having me Angela, and it's really great to be here with the LSAC team and with the other Marshall-Motley folks. My name is Nathan, I use see him pronouns. I'm a three L at Harvard Law School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. For undergrad I went to Princeton University where I was a major in African-American Studies and my hometown is Rockville, Maryland, just outside DC and I'm part of the second cohort of the Marshall Maui Scholars Program.

Angela Winfield: Fantastic. So let's just talk a little bit about why and how you decided to actually apply for the Marshall-Motley Scholar Program. Nathan, let's stay with you for this one and then I'll come to you Sondos. Tell me about how you discovered the program and why it was so compelling for you.

Nathan Poland: Yeah, so I discovered the program when I was actually sort of knee deep in the work that I think the program is really trying to uplift. I was at the time working for a group called Civil Rights Corps, which does civil rights litigation and community organizing in communities throughout the south and I was looking to go to law school the next year, this was in 2020 I believe, and I saw this scholarship sort of on a web search and it really struck me as something that I really wanted to put myself forward for three reasons. First of all, the scholarship is all about civil rights, community organizing and those are the things that I love to do and was already doing. It's for black communities and third, it's four black communities in the south and that's the work that I have been doing was doing and will continue to be doing and I really saw the scholarship as an opportunity to continue that and to actually do it farther and to a better extent than I could have on my own. So it really seemed like opportunity maximizing scholarship.

Angela Winfield: Indeed, it sounds like it was clearly aligned with your commitment that you had already been living out and would help you advance that in a better and more impactful way, so that's fabulous. Sondos, what about you? How did you discover the program and why were you compelled to apply?

Sondos Moursy: Well, I attended University of Houston for undergrad and one of the MMSP people came to speak to us about the program and it was fairly new and at the time that I was introduced to this program, similar to Nathan, I was also doing the work particularly with formerly incarcerated women of color in the Harris County Houston area. And the experiences I had serving these women, particularly in the reentry and incarceration space were very profound and I really wanted to go to law school, but I was first gen. I actually don't know anybody in my entire community who was a lawyer, so I didn't know what the pathway would look like for me and hearing this program, I mean how holistic it was not just from the financial support making it financially feasible to attend law school, but also the amount of opportunity that they were going to provide and the connections that I wouldn't have otherwise was really compelling. And I said, this is a godsend, of course I'm going to apply.

Angela Winfield: Yes. And I want to talk a little bit more about those opportunities that you mentioned and that it's more than just financial support and you were first generation, so you didn't know about this pathway and you didn't have that network. Can you tell me a little bit about those opportunities and specifically the internship portion and what you've been doing during your summers as an MMSP participant?

Sondos Moursy: Yes, so the internship process in law school is actually quite difficult. Outside of the Marshall-Motley Scholars program, it's very difficult to secure an internship where you can do the work that you're passionate about. Particularly in the work we do in the public interest space, there isn't a streamlined process. It's very, very difficult to get in and once you're in, find something that aligns with the work you're trying to do. So the Marshy Motley Scholarship Program actually has partners, has a partnership with quite a few civil rights orgs doing work in the south and they really facilitate and streamline that internship process, whereas it might be quite stressful for any other law student try to secure their summer employment. Our process is very streamlined and quite easy. I would say this past summer I had the privilege of working with Texas Civil Rights project in Austin and I had the privilege of working on cases that had to do with prison conditions and this is exactly the kind of work that I want to do.

It's truly a blessing to wake up every day and do work you're passionate about. That's not an experience that everybody gets and it's experience that's only been possible because of the Marshall-Molly Scholars program and even I was not connected with Texas Civil Rights project and I was connected with them through the Marshall Molly Scholars program. I was not aware of the work that they do, but throughout the internship process, you're going to interview with quite a few places and so even if you don't get placed that you don't choose to go there for the summer, you have that connection moving forward and it's really beautiful because during my 2L year I was able to work with the A CLU of Texas actually at the Civil rights Clinic of my university. So even though I may not have interned with them in the summer, those connections are truly lifelong and invaluable in this industry.

Angela Winfield: That is so true. It's about building those relationships, building your network and having those connections and it sounds like this program has helped you to do that in a number of direct ways and also indirect ways,

which is incredibly beneficial. Nathan, you are entering or are in your third year of law school, which means you've had at least two summers with the program and you're getting ready to finish up. Can you tell us what are some of the highlights? What are some of the memorable experiences that you've had with your internships?

Nathan Poland: Sure thing. I actually can't believe it as a 3L. It's been two years already and just one more to go before I'm done with law school. It's been a blur, a roller coaster, a lot of highs and of course some lows, but

Angela Winfield: We can go there if you want. I might ask you some questions.

Nathan Poland: No, absolutely. But since you were asking about the internships, those actually happened to be some of the greatest high points and to what Sandos was saying, for me, the internships and the internship process was really seamless and smooth because of the Marshall-Motley Program's matching program. And so while I had other peers of mine here at Harvard who were trying to intern at almost the exact same places, the process that the Marshall-Motley Scholarship sets up allowed it to just be that much more smooth and allowed me to take time off of my plate to do that application work and put it on my plate to do my schoolwork, to do pro bono work outside of class. And it really made it a very light lift when I know for other students can be one of the pain points of their entire law school experience is securing the summer internships.

So highlight for me, of course is my summers as a one L. I got to intern at the Promise of Justice Initiative, which is an organization in New Orleans, Louisiana that does prison advocacy work. It does civil rights work and it also does post-conviction litigation work. And I had the chance to work on a few of their projects including one regarding non non unanimous juries. That's a mouthful, but non unanimous juries in Louisiana, which essentially meant that up until 2020 convictions could be imposed, a jury that voted 11 to one or 10 to two, essentially a non unanimous jury could convict somebody of a crime in Louisiana up until 2020 and Promise of Justice Initiative was one of the organizations that was bringing attention to that and really raising the issue is a constitutional one that this is in violation of our constitution and the Supreme Court in 2020 said as much, and so I got an opportunity to work on a case of a gentleman who to this day still has a non unanimous jury conviction.

Unfortunately, the Supreme Court decided that that scheme was illegal but it didn't correct it retroactively. And so PJI and I got to do some of this work is in the business of trying to correct those sentences so that people are afforded the full opportunity of justice that the constitution should provide all of us and that was just a really fantastic first year summer to go from studying property and torts and then jump right into something as profound and important as that was just a dream come true. Like Sandos said, I know it's not everybody's situation to be able to wake up and do exactly what you love. And so I really, really appreciate the program for providing me with that and allowing me to do the racial justice work that I came to law school to do. As for my second year, I was at the Southern Center for Human Rights in Georgia in Atlanta, which similar profile I'm interested in criminal legal work, so I was doing post-conviction work, impact litigation and capital defense in Georgia and throughout the south and that was a phenomenal experience because as a two folks probably know it's a slightly more intensive experience.

You've got few more classes under your belt, you might have some more writing experience. So for that internship, I actually had the opportunity to represent somebody directly in their parole hearing in front of the Alabama Board of Parole and I got to represent them and lay out their case. They had been incarcerated for 10 years and I got to play a pivotal role in bringing their story to the board of Paroles and having their application considered. In addition to that, I got a chance to do impact litigation. I actually worked on a brief that went in front of the Georgia Supreme Court and it's sort of the stuff of dreams to get to be able to do that as a student.

Angela Winfield: Yes, that's incredible because that is real practice. Those are practical skills and you're using it to impact a real person's life that is an incredible opportunity that many people don't get. I do want to go back a little bit to something that you mentioned, Nathan, because you mentioned the highlights and the lowlights of this journey and experience, but I don't want to get deep into the low lights, but I do want to know how has being a part of a cohort like MMSP been helpful to you in terms of getting through the times that are challenging or difficult?

Nathan Poland: It's having the Marshall-Motley program and the cohort of other students has been essential to my wellbeing and success in law school. Sandos mentioned, of course there is the financial support, but a lot of things in the Marshall-Motley Program might not call out to people on first look but are as important. Having a cohort of other students in the same year as me, but also a year ahead of me, you all saw the video of the inaugural cohort. I was tearing up a little bit because those were the two Ls that were greeting me in when I was a one L just a few years ago and one of them, Victor Fin who spoke, he was sort of my predecessor here at Harvard and he informed so much of what my life looks like at Harvard today. And so seeing him accept the scholarship in that moment, I had no idea, no one had any idea, but he would be accepting it and then passing on the gift of his knowledge to me.

So not everyone has I think the opportunity to have a scholar ahead of them at their respective institution, but for me, having somebody who is the extended family, so to speak at my school has just been so meaningful and to be able to provide that for students who are first years and second years here at Harvard, other Marshall-Motley's is also really special. It's sort of welcoming people into the family and into the assignment and the mission that we've all taken on of doing racial justice work on behalf of black communities in the South. And that's just so special and it's never lost on me how blessed we really are.

Angela Winfield: Indeed. Thank you so much for sharing that because having community, having cohort, having relationships, it seems like it's multilayered here that you're getting that with your internships in the professional sense, but you're also getting it with the cohort and just being a part of this community and this family. You're going to have your cohort that's at your same year in law school, but then also those who came before you as well. Sondos, do you have any stories or anything that you would like to add about the community from your experience and what it's like being a member of the cohort?

Sondos Moursy: Yeah, I would definitely echo everything Nathan said, but I also want to add one benefit of the cohort community that I didn't see when I was applying to the Marshall Molly Scholars program. I think that the direction in which we take our work is extremely important and we're doing our work during very high tension times where we are being work is just not easy and it's very difficult to strategize and to make your work and yourself and the orgs that you support resilient in a way that will survive the climate in which we live. And I am a 23-year-old woman. I have had very valuable experiences up until this point, but there's so much I don't know. And being in this cohort of people who have had such a diversity of experiences, a diversity of perspectives has been integral to building the career that I'm trying to build in this space and supporting communities in ways that I never even considered. Everybody works in a different pocket of the public interest space in serving the black community. Some people work on incarceration, some people focus on the reentry, some people focus on voting rights and education, all of which are important and being able to piece, to have a step back and have a perspective of all of this work that we are collectively doing has been so, like Nathan said, essential in the direction that I take and the opportunities that I pursue as a Marshall-Molly scholar.

Angela Winfield: Yeah, it's seeing the whole system, right, because there's all of these pieces, as you say, two civil rights and two justice, and you have your area, but the folks that you're working with have different areas. So you get to begin to see how all of that fits together. That is so critical. Thank you for that. Now, Sondos, you mentioned earlier that when you learned about the program, it was what we call a no-brainer. You're like, why wouldn't I apply? Absolutely. This is aligned with what I want to do. Tell me about the application process itself, and we don't need to get into the details of it, Christina will tell us that, but I want to know for you, what were you thinking about when you were putting together your application? Did you have concerns at all and what do you wish you knew then that now when you were putting together the application?

Sondos Moursy: I would say your experiences are valued by the Marshall-Motley Scholarship Program in ways that they might not be in other spaces in this world. So just to put you on the timeline in which I was applying, by the time I applied to this program, I had already applied to law school. I had applied to every scholarship under the sun. I had done countless interviews. This was not my first rodeo. I had done countless interviews with law schools, with scholarship programs, with just throughout my undergraduate experience. So to constantly secure funding for the work that I was doing for formerly incarcerated women, I constantly had to do applications and interview process. And there was this uncomfortable experience that I always had before an application and interview where I had to decide which part of myself I was going to present and how I wanted to present myself and how this panel based on who they were was going to perceive me in my work and how my civil rights work was not always going to be seen as valuable or relevant or worth funding, et cetera.

The application process, let's talk about that before we get into the interview. The application process in itself was so transformative for me as a person just sitting down and writing the application because for the first time in my life I had reflected on how the black community has contributed to me my entire life and led up to this point. Just for context, my family immigrated from Egypt when I was four years old to Lafayette, Louisiana, which is in the deep south. And unfortunately there's still a lot of lingering problematic policies that you can see just as a child growing up in Louisiana in the education system and the inequalities that the black community constantly faces. But also as an immigrant, I faced my own unique struggles and the black community constantly supported me. When I just look back, my teachers, my healthcare professionals, the religious scholars that were at my mosque, they were all black and they were all truly, they were the village that took my family in.

And that was the first, when I was writing the application process, was the first time that I reflected on this and how this wasn't just a positive experiences that I had growing up. These were divine experiences that were preparing me for this moment. I was meant to be a civil rights lawyer. This was all planned and this was a huge moment for me, regardless of

whether I knew in that moment, regardless of whether I got accepted into the program or not, this is exactly the work that I was meant to do. And every experience I had leading up to this was preparing me for this moment and to move forward to the internship. I mean the interview process, I just remember an overwhelming sense of warmth the second I joined the interview, which is an experience that I had not had prior. My experiences were valued.

The work that I was doing was valued. I didn't feel like I had to jump through hoops of fire to justify the work that I was doing or in ways that I've done before. And I felt like I was in a family. I felt like I could speak on the profound experiences I had with women who have been subject to all the injustices. That one tends to be because of the criminal justice system and my experiences were being received. So to answer your question more accurately, what would I encourage or recommend somebody who's going through this process now is do not belittle your experiences. Please, the Marshall-Motley Scholarship Program, there's nothing like it. Your experiences will be valued here in ways that they may have never been before.

Angela Winfield: That is terrific advice, right? If you want to be the light and shine, you can't hide your light. You've got to talk about your experiences and what this means to you. And the other thing that I think is very wise and profound that you said, Sondos, is that going through the process of applying was transformative in and of itself, right? It gave you that reassurance and that clarity that yes, this is my path. The things that I have been doing up to this point have led me here. And you also said, regardless of whether I got in, it made you really feel like this is what you were meant to do, which is incredible because applying isn't always easy. Putting together the application is not always an easy process, and it requires thought and time, but that exercise of doing it gave you value as well. Nathan, how about you? What was the application process like and what advice would you have for folks who are on this webinar thinking about applying?

Nathan Poland: Well, first of all, Sondos, that was beautiful and it just deeply resonated in me everything that you said because I felt very similarly. I guess my message would be to folks who are listening to this webinar is obviously apply. You really can't go through the process without first applying. And maybe I'll throw in some free tips about that later. But for me, the process really kind of hit me out of nowhere. I was two years out from undergrad and I was in the work in Houston, Texas working on public safety and police accountability in Houston, Texas. So in a way, I wasn't prepared to do a whole application, but I saw the opportunity. And even though I was knee deep in the work, I just set aside the time to do that application faithfully. So I guess my tip number one folks out there is just dedicate the time, really sink the time into it because first of all, it's maximizing your own opportunity.

But second, similar to Sondos, I had a very amazing experience that clarified a lot for me just by articulating in an application part of my story. A lot of the work that I had done up to that point, especially in undergrad, was telling other people's stories, whether it was through advocacy on behalf of incarcerated people, formerly incarcerated people, also what I was doing in Texas itself. And I realized that I'm someone who loves telling people stories and uplifting them and using those stories as a vehicle to recognize and affirm their humanity. And I realized in that application process that I don't do that often for myself. And the application process gave me the opportunity to take some possession and ownership of everything that I've been doing and use my story and actually pay myself a little bit of a favor that I had been paying other people. So that was really beautiful, and I think anybody who applies can enjoy that benefit regardless of how it goes, because of how rigorous and thoughtful the questions on the application are. There's a lot to yield just from engaging with those in a serious way. I will also say clarity is very important for any application, but since there are word limits, succinct and precise with your language, oh my gosh, I got to turn those lights back on, but give me a moment.

Angela Winfield: We've got to have the light, got to have the light light on.

Nathan Poland: But being succinct is very important. And then the other part is showing your story as opposed to telling it and describing where you find yourself, where the application finds you and where you actually envision yourself going with the civil rights work that you plan to do. That's paramount. And it's not enough to sort of describe it. The demonstrated commitment that I know sounds like a broken record is something that has to really go into that application. And that's certainly what the application brought out of me. And I think the other big takeaway for me from the application was I didn't think I had a chance at all. This is an extremely competitive process, and I did not know until the very last second that it was going well. I got to the interview stage and I was like, great, three more interviews to go and then maybe I'll be a finalist or something like that.

And it ended up working out. And so just to get to that stage required a lot of fortitude and dedication. And so I would just really encourage people to try to find that in themselves and to set their minds to the application because that is what's going to be required to do this kind of work anyway. And like Sondos said, for me, I was going to do this type of racial justice work in the South regardless of this MMSP opportunity. And so it is a quality that I think is really important is having this sort of sticktuitiveness to get through the app because there are many other challenges that would be coming up ahead for you in your career as a civil rights attorney. But it's a great question.

Angela Winfield: Thank you so much. So we have a little bit more time before we're going to get into the application, so I'm going to go off script and ask you one last question. And this is kind of indulgent for me as well. I told you that video every year, it gets me every year and I tear up, especially when we see people getting the call. And I love the call because I believe that you are called to this work, right? Literally and figuratively and very literally for the MMSP program. So I just want to know, what was that experience like for you getting the actual call that you were into the program? Sondos, let's start with you.

Sondos Moursy: This was the moment that I knew that this wasn't just a professional or academic program. This was a family because they actually not only put me on a call to tell me that I had gotten accepted, but they had put my mom as well. And this was so important to me and my family and the fact that they thought to include my whole family, that was so important to me. I mean, I think my mom was more happy about it than I was. Obviously I was ecstatic, but my mother who had raised me and done just poured into me all these years being part of that, that just meant the world to my whole family seriously. And it is not only a positive moment in a memory for me, it's like a memory that my whole family gets to look back on and how excited it was to receive that call and we actually have it recorded and to watch it sometimes.

Angela Winfield: That is awesome. And I'm guessing watching it is one of those things that uplifts you. I know that would be that way for me. So that's wonderful. And Nathan, for you, what was it like getting the call?

Nathan Poland: I mean magical, absolutely magical. I was gobsmacked, I don't know if I've ever used the word, but that is what happened in that moment for my cohorts, sort of similar to cohort one, it was a sort of somewhat ambiguous meeting at first. I remember from my cohort, we were asked to come back because there were supposedly two sets of finalists. There was a 10 person group of finalists over here and a 10 person group of finalists over there. And we were asked to do a sort of final group interview between one set of the 10 finalists. And I remember that interview being both one of my favorite and one of my hardest sort of sit down interviews ever, because a lot of the questions were really unexpected. They were questions about what would it mean to you and your family to receive this type of opportunity?

And questions about family don't necessarily come up in the application. But that one really hit me because it made me realize that I would be the first person in my family to be a lawyer. I'm not a first gen student, but no one in my family knows anything about the law. No one is a lawyer. And it really hit me that there was a lot of people that would just get so much benefit out of me being able to pursue a legal education with the kind of support that Marshall-Motley would be providing. And yeah, it really got very emotional. And it was one of the first times I actually bonded with my cohort because it turned out that that 10 person group was actually the only finalist group, and we had already been selected before we stepped into that interview. So I was gobsmacked and I was together with my community already. And I think that's really sort of what characterizes the marsh motley is as soon as you're in your family, and yeah, I look back on that video sometimes as well because when the exams didn't go exactly how I wanted or it's been a tough day, there's nothing like looking back at a video of unbridled joy.

Angela Winfield: That's right. That is right. And that is so beautiful that they've got some tricks up their sleeve to make this a celebration and to make it joyful because it is such a joyful experience. Oh, thank you both so much for sharing your stories and answering my questions. Please stick around when we get to the q and a. We may be calling on you for some of those questions, but at this time I want to invite Christina to join us again and to walk us through some of the nitty gritty logistics about this. So we've got people all excited you've heard about the program. Now let's hear what you have to do if you want to apply and be a part of the next cohort. Christina.

Christina Hayes: Great. Thank you. Angela, if we can get the slides prepared, please. Nathan and Sondos, you did such a great job. Oh my goodness. Wonderful. Thank you so much. So before I jump in, I do want to just note that all these application components as well as the tutorial video on walking through the application process can be found via our website. That's Marshall-Motley scholars.org. You can go to the application page and click apply now and it will take you to the application platform, which is called Kaleidoscope. Next slide please. So first, let's talk about what does it take to be eligible for this application cycle. So this cycle for the fifth cohort is for those entering law school for fall 2025. That's as a first year and a full-time student. So the program does not accommodate part-time or joint degree programs. You also will need to have a bachelor's degree by September, 2025. And lastly, be a US citizen or have permanent resident status. Next slide.

So once you go to the application page, you click apply. Now it takes you to Kaleidoscope and you will create your account. Then you can access the application. You'll enter your contact information and confirm that you meet those eligibility requirements. And then you'll note the law schools to which you have applied. I saw this question in the q and a. You do not have to be admitted to law school in order to apply for the Marshall-Motley Scholars Program. However, if you are accepted as a finalist, so I say end of February, early March, we will need to know that you have been accepted by

that time have been admitted in the application. You'll also note any additional scholarships or awards. So we know. And this application will also require two letters of recommendation. Someone asked in the question and answer in the Q&A.

Also about these letters of recommendation, applicants should not and will not need to view their letters or upload their letters. You will note the recommender that you choose and Kaleidoscope will send your recommender a link to access the portal. Your recommenders will upload those letters directly to the platform. And you want to make sure that these recommenders are able to speak to components that line up with the mission of the program. So can they speak to your commitment to racial justice to black communities in the south? Those are the letters that are the strongest. Then we go to the educational background and you'll upload your transcript and unofficial transcript is fine. You can also upload a graduate transcript if that applies to you, and you'll upload your resume, which of course includes your education, extracurricular activities, community involvement, and employment history. Next slide please.

So then we get to the test scores. The LSAT or GRE will accept either score. You should use the score that is required for your law school admission. And I do want to say here that there is no minimum LSAT or GRE score. And there's also not a minimum GPA. In fact, we do not let the selection committee even see your LSAT or GRE or GPA information. And the goal of that really is to remove points of bias, but also allow the committee to see each applicant from as holistic viewpoint as possible. So you'll enter those scores. And then the next question asks you to note your practice areas of interest. And that's just to give the committee an idea of who you are and what you're interested in. So you'll check all that apply. That's gender justice, reproductive rights, voting rights, et cetera. Then we get to the two written sections of the application, and that's your personal statement and your essay.

Both of these sections have a 1500 word maximum. I encourage you to write as close to 1500 words while still being concise for the personal statement. It is personal. That's going to be your background, your experiences, your talents, your achievements. You want to talk about what has brought you to this moment, what has inspired you to pursue racial justice as a career path, what's inspired you to apply for this program. And then you can touch on what actions you're currently taking to carry out racial justice work. So you heard Nathan and Sondos both talk about I was already doing the work, I was already involved in this. That's that demonstrated commitment that we keep referring to. So you can talk about that as well. And I also want to note, you can talk about your lived experiences. Those are very impactful and help make an application stand out as well.

So people have talked about their family upbringing or dealing with homelessness, different experiences that have shaped you and made you who you are today. Now the essay is going to be a little broader and it focuses more on the why, the why of practicing civil rights law. So here the committee wants to know that you understand these black communities for which you are going to advocate. Do you understand structural racism and the impact of structural racism and racial injustice, and how does that really affect these communities in the south? And then it's the why of civil rights law. Why is civil rights law the vehicle that you want to choose for advocating for these communities? Next slide, please. So then we get to the most hated part of the application, and that is the video, the video responses. This year we have three questions. So we took one away and you're going to be asked to upload or to provide a Vimeo or YouTube link.

The first question is three minutes max. The second question is two minutes max. The third question is one minute. You do not have to use the entire time. So the first question deals with demonstrated commitment. This is a question that has been on every Marshall-Motley Scholar's application, and it is going to remain, I'm sure. So how are you currently living the life of a Marshall-Motley Scholar? And again, that's the things that Sondos and Nathan referred to. You can talk about your community involvement, your service projects, mentoring opportunities, just anything that you've done that shows a tangible connection to those core areas of civil rights and racial justice, black communities and the South. Now, question two, we'll lean more into finances and financial management. And we really want to know that you have thought soberly about this path and about this application process because it is a 13 year commitment.

That's three years of law school, two year postgraduate fellowship, and eight years of practice. So here the question is asking if you really understand the differences between a civil rights law path versus a big law path. And we've included a link to the National Association of Law Placement, which gives average salaries for public interest attorneys because again, we want to make sure that you've thought about this clearly and soberly and know what you are applying for. Another question there, how would you manage the economic reality of receiving such a substantial scholarship amount? People have talked about their budgeting practices and anything to show that they're able to manage funds responsibly. And lastly, the question on how do you deal with setbacks and challenges? This is simply because racial justice work can be very heavy, it can be very draining, it can be frustrating depending on the outcome.

And so the selection committee will want to know that you are someone who is able to bounce back from setbacks and bounce back from challenges. So here you can speak on your wellness, on your self-care. You can speak on a specific incident or experience and talk about how you overcame that challenge. Next slide. So this is rounding us out. We're

almost there. The next question is optional, and that's just any additional information you would like to share for the selection committee, anything that can add dimension to your application and give just a deeper look into who you are as a candidate. Some people do leave this section blank. We've had a past scholar who included links to a local news coverage that have been done on some of her community work. So that's an example of something you could include there. And then you'll be asked to confirm two sections, understanding the nature of scholarships. That is that scholarship funds can be taxable and that MMSP cannot provide tax advice and also asking you to disclose any relationship that could be viewed as a conflict of interest. The last question is demographic information. That's for our data purposes, and that is also optional. And you'll see I've noted that in bright yellow. Please opt in for notifications when the platform asks you if you want to opt in, please say yes. That will ensure that you continue to receive application updates including who has been selected. Next slide.

So this is our timeline that we're looking at tomorrow. November 1st. The application will open at 9:00 AM Eastern, 6:00 AM Pacific standard time. And I do want to say we understand that the application deadline was originally February 4th. We extended that to February 5th to allow for those who are taking the January Isat. So you'll be able to go in and complete as much of the application as possible and then submit that score on February 5th in time for the deadline. The deadline will close February 5th at 11:59. That's Pacific Standard Time, and that is just to allow the West Coast candidates to be able to complete their application as well. In March, applications will be reviewed and finalists will be selected. It's approximately 20 finalists that will be selected and brought to Atlanta, Georgia to interview in person with a small group of LDF leadership, practicing civil rights attorneys and other civil rights leaders in that space.

All accommodations, all transportation will be covered by the program, so you don't have to worry about that. And then in April, the next cohort, the fifth cohort of Marshall-Motley Scholars will be selected and we will have another public announcement. So I hope that that helps kind of explain what you can expect when you log in. And of course, you can reach out to kaleidoscope's email, which is there on our website, help@mykaleidoscope.com if you have technical questions. And you're more than welcome to also reach out to the Marshall-Motley Scholars team if you have any program or application related questions. Thank you.

Angela Winfield: Thank you so much, Christina.

Christina Hayes: You're welcome.

Angela Winfield: That was wonderful. And I'm just going to highlight the key dates. So tomorrow, applications open and you have until February 5th, 2025 at 1159 Pacific Time to get that in. So you have time you work on it, carve out the time and work on the applications. So we have just a few minutes here and I promise you that we'd get to q and a. So I'm going to invite my colleague, Collin from LawHub on. Collin, can you come on and let me know what questions do we have in the Q&A?

Collin Takita: Absolutely. Thank you very much, Angela. And thank you Christina and Nathan and Sandoz for a great session today. I'm here to help out with some q and a. So Angela, a lot of questions have come in about the eight year of practice afterwards, a lot of questions about where those jobs can be located. So I guess we'll start with that question. Where can people practice for eight years after at the end of this program?

Angela Winfield: That sounds like a perfect question for Christina. Would you please take that one?

Christina Hayes: Thank you for that question. So I will preface this by saying the details for those eight years are still being finalized. Our first cohort just began their fellowship, so we have not even reached that phase of the program just yet. But I will say that we understand because I've seen a bunch of questions about the eight years as well. We understand that there are many ways to do racial justice work and that civil rights law is going to be intersectional. So there are some that have, they lean toward environmental justice, some that lean toward reproductive rights, et cetera, et cetera. The requirement and what will remain is that those eight years in the work you're doing must connect and align with the mission of the program. The mission is what matters at Marshall-Motley Scholars Program. So the mission of your work, the central focus of your work should be advocacy for black communities in the south, and I say in the south because that's where the work will have to be done. If you go to our application page, you'll see those target states that qualify as the south for the purposes of this program. And so the work will need to be done in those states.

I do want to say also that I saw another question about organizations being accepted, and there's a difference between our pool of internship and fellowship partner organizations and organizations that scholars will be working at for the eight years. So you not, once you get to the eight years, you're not required to work with one of the approved partners. Those eight years you'll be applying for those jobs and going after those jobs. So again, the important thing about the eight years is that your work still aligns with the mission of MMSP.

Angela Winfield: Thank you, Christina. And I'll just underscore that for folks who are concerned, because I think what I heard was that the two year fellowship after law school, that is something that is done through MMSP and your network, but the eight year service and practice is something that you would do outside and you'd be applying for the job separately. But it could be intersectional and it could be in areas that overlap with, but still serve the black community in the south. Okay, great. Thank you. Collin. I think we have time for one more question.

Collin Takita: This last question is probably a good one to end on, and that is what states qualify as the South for the sake of this program? And does that preclude the opportunity of supporting communities in the north as well?

Angela Winfield: Christina, that is a good question. Do you have thoughts and can you share the policies on that?

Christina Hayes: Right. So again, there's 13 states that qualify as the South for the purposes of the program. I don't have my little image in front of me right now, but it's basically starting at Virginia all the way down to Florida, goes out to Texas. It includes Missouri as well, Kentucky. So the focus of the program is really those 13 states, and we understand that racism and racial injustice is happening all over the country, and scholars are free to still advocate for underserved and for communities for which they have a conscience and that they're interested in. But when it comes to MMSP and carrying out the internship, carrying out your fellowship and the eight years of practice, that will be focused in those 13 states of the south.

Angela Winfield: Okay. And Christina, please correct me if I'm wrong about this. It seems to me like one of the reasons why the focus and the mission is the South is just because the historical nature in this country of civil rights and where the need is, where there's a tremendous amount of work to be done, but also knowing that when you focus on areas specifically like the South, that does have ripple effects and it will impact and benefit folks outside of those areas because it is a system. We have a system of laws and rights and good work done in one place can often influence and impact other places geographically. Would you agree with that?

Christina Hayes: Absolutely. And I'm so glad you said that because at the end of the day, this program is hoping to not only just alleviate the debt burden that deters many promising candidates from following a path in civil rights law, but I'd be remiss if I left out just the times in which we are living, right, that there is a need for the Marshall-Motley Scholars Program, especially in the South all over, but especially in the south. The south is full of wonderful and rich traditions and rich cultural heritage, but we cannot deny the history of racial violence and racial in that region. And it is also the area where the majority of Black Americans live. So that is the goal to build up this cadre, to build up this network of aspiring civil rights attorneys who are going to go at it and work not only for black communities, but work alongside of them and work to build them up and really improve the ecosystem of that region, knowing that it will affect the country as a whole.

Nathan Poland: And I hope it's okay for me to jump in, Angela.

Angela Winfield: Absolutely, yes. I was just about to call on you because we have about a minute. So I would love, yeah,

Nathan Poland: I was going to provide that list of the 13 states off of the Marshall-Motley Scholars website, which folks can go online and find those states are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. I'm someone who's from Maryland, which does not qualify as the South. But to what Christina was saying, for me, the program's mission, I think really demands an understanding of the South that looks like those 13 states because of the history of racial violence and racial subjugation, and also the profound need in those places. Not to say that there isn't need or racial violence or all of those racial injustice issues in Maryland, but the question about what Marshall-Motley is doing is where are the lawyers needed? Where is the dearth of lawyers? And that can be mapped on perfectly onto those 13th states. So I, I'll just leave you with that.

Angela Winfield: Absolutely. Thank you so much for that. And thank you all Sondos, Nathan, Christina, it has been an absolute pleasure having this conversation with you and helping to folks understand what MMSP is, how they can apply. And I will just leave you all with a few final thoughts. One is the need. One of the things that I say often is that we need more attorneys. We do, but we don't need just any attorneys. We need attorneys who are committed to advancing justice, who are committed to advancing civil rights and addressing dire issues of need. And if that's you on this webinar right now, then you should apply. Knowing that whether or not you get in going through the application process will help you clarify what it is that you want to be. And you may be called literally and figuratively. So I encourage you all to apply.

Angela Winfield: I also encourage you to look at the wealth of resources that are available on lawhub.org. This opportunity may or may not be the right one for you, but there are resources and support regardless of what you want to practice. And if you are not eligible to participate and apply this year, meaning won't be entering law school next year, please, I encourage you to look at other programs like LSAC plus Guided Journey, which can help you if you're looking at

applying to school and applying to law school and attending in fall 26 or beyond. So with that, thank you all very much. I wish you all the best on Journeys, and again, please check out resources on lawhub.org. I'm Angela Winfield, vice President and Chief Diversity Officer at LSAC. Thank you.

Voiceover: LawHub.

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