



For Immediate Release
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LDF Media
212-965-2200 / media@naacpldf.org

LDF Welcomes Janell Byrd-Chichester as Director of the Thurgood Marshall Institute

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc (LDF) is pleased to announce the appointment of Janell Byrd-Chichester as Director of LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute. Janell is returning to LDF after having previously served as Assistant Counsel from 1987-2001. During her previous LDF tenure, she litigated school desegregation and affirmative action cases, headed up our education policy work, and managed LDF's DC office.

"I can think of no one better positioned to move forward the work of the Institute at this critical moment than Janell Byrd," said Sherrilyn Ifill, President & Director-Counsel of LDF. "Although the Institute was first launched in 2016, Ms. Byrd-Chichester developed the thinking within LDF years ago about the need for the creation of an organizational think tank. Her early, visionary work formed the blueprint for what later became the Institute," Ifill explained.

Ms. Byrd-Chichester comes to this position with a more than 30-year career as a civil rights litigator and public policy advocate who has used social science research extensively on a broad array of civil rights issues – including fair housing and lending, school desegregation, affirmative action, employment discrimination, police misconduct, and public accommodations. –

"Janell Byrd-Chichester is the whole package. She is a brilliant, sophisticated and daring advocate, with a range of substantive civil rights experience that is unique and exceptional. The intellectual heft she brings to leadership at the Institute is precisely what we need to ensure that the Institute plays a leading role in educating the public, elected leaders and influencers about the civil rights challenges we face at this moment. It is both fitting and exciting to have Janell Byrd-Chichester return to LDF to continue the work of developing and expanding the Institute's reach and impact," Ifill continued.

Since she departed LDF, Ms. Byrd-Chichester has had an outstanding and varied career. Most recently, she served as the Chief of Staff at the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA), a federal agency created after the recent financial crisis that serves as the regulator and conservator for mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and as regulator of the Federal Home Loan Banks. Prior to her role at FHFA, she was a partner at the Washington, DC law firm Mehri & Skalet, where she built a fair housing and lending practice. Prior to that, Ms. Byrd-Chichester was Co-Managing Attorney at The Cochran

Firm in Washington, DC, where she litigated police misconduct, public accommodations, and employment discrimination matters and served as a public policy consultant to civil rights organizations on a broad array of issues. Ms. Byrd-Chichester also taught as a Visiting Professor at the University of Maryland School of Law.

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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 and 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.

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