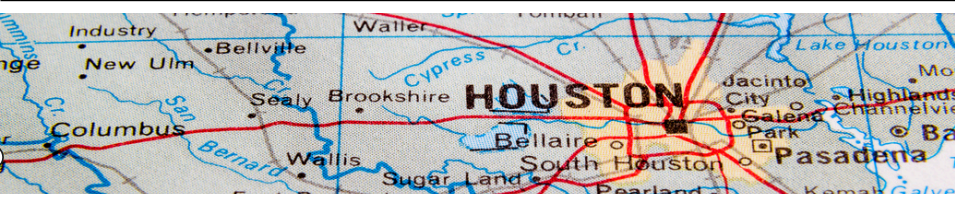




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With the world in constant motion and recent Supreme Court decisions making headlines, it's essential to remember the greats of the past. Thurgood Marshall's birthday, coming up on July 2nd, reminds us of his incredible legacy. As the first Black Supreme Court Justice, Marshall played a pivotal role in the Brown vs. Board of Education decision. His dedication to family and community is truly inspiring. Picture young Thurgood, working in his father's restaurant, earning a \$20 tip from a belligerent, racist senator. That experience taught him to navigate a system designed to disenfranchise and humiliate minorities, turning adversity into sweet, southern lemonade.

Marshall's rejection from the University of Maryland fueled his drive to become one of the most strategic and diligent lawyers of his time. This setback motivated him to win cases that paved the way for the historic Brown vs. Board of Education decision. His tenacity and understanding of which battles to fight and where to fight them showcased his genius and innovative mind.

In stark contrast, Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas often seems to undermine the very paths that allowed him to inherit his position. Michael Waldman on MSNBC described Thomas's approach as "originalism," meaning only laws rooted in history and tradition are valid. This perspective suggests that the views of property-owning white men from the 1700s should govern modern America. Bless his heart! Overturning crucial legislation during such a critical election year highlights the need for vigilance.

Honoring Thurgood Marshall's legacy is more important than ever. With six Texas Supreme Court seats up for either re-election or new appointments, educating oneself about the candidates is vital. The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, the highest appellate court in Texas for criminal cases, decides every appeal on the Texas death penalty. Additionally, the Houston 1st and 14th Court of Appeals have vacant seats. Candidates such as Brendetta Scott, Sarah Beth Landau, Julie Countiss, Richard Hightower, Amber Boyd-Lora, Velda Renita Faulkner, Charles Spain, Frances Bourliot, Megan Hassan, and Margaret "Meg" Passant are running for these positions. Understanding their platforms and decision-making processes is essential.

From one southern belle to another, it's time to use the power at hand. Thurgood Marshall once said, "Where you see wrong or inequality or injustice, speak out, because this is your country. This is your democracy. Make it. Protect it. Pass it on."



Recipe of the Week: Pineapple Paradise Cake

- Ingredients:**
- 2 cups granulated sugar
 - 1 cup unsalted butter, room temperature
 - 3 large eggs, room temperature
 - 1 tsp coconut extract
 - 1 tsp vanilla extract
 - 3 cups cake flour
 - 1 tbsp baking powder
 - 1/2 tsp salt
 - 1 cup coconut milk
 - 1 cup crushed pineapple, drained
 - 1 cup sweetened shredded coconut
- For the frosting:**
- 1 cup unsalted butter, room temperature
 - 8 oz cream cheese, room temperature
 - 4 cups powdered sugar
 - 1 tsp vanilla extract
 - 1/2 tsp coconut extract
 - 1 cup sweetened shredded coconut (for topping)
- Instructions:**
1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease and flour three 8-inch round cake pans.
 2. In a large bowl, cream together the sugar and butter until light and fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Stir in the coconut and vanilla extracts.
 3. In another bowl, whisk together the cake flour, baking powder, and salt. Add the dry ingredients to the butter mixture alternately with the coconut milk, beginning and ending with the flour mixture. Stir in the crushed pineapple and shredded coconut.
 4. Divide the batter evenly among the prepared pans and smooth the tops. Bake for 25-30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Allow the cakes to cool in pans for 10 minutes, then turn out onto wire racks to cool completely.
 5. For the frosting, beat the butter and cream cheese together until creamy. Gradually add the powdered sugar, beating until light and fluffy. Stir in the vanilla and coconut extracts.
 6. To assemble, place one cake layer on a serving plate. Spread with frosting. Repeat with the second and third layers. Frost the top and sides of the cake. Sprinkle the shredded coconut on top.
 7. Slice a piece, sit back, and let the southern sweetness wash over you. Enjoy a slice of Southern comfort with this delicious cake!.

From the wisdom of Thurgood Marshall to a cake that'll captivate anyone, embrace history and make voices heard. Because if not us, then who? If not now, then when?

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