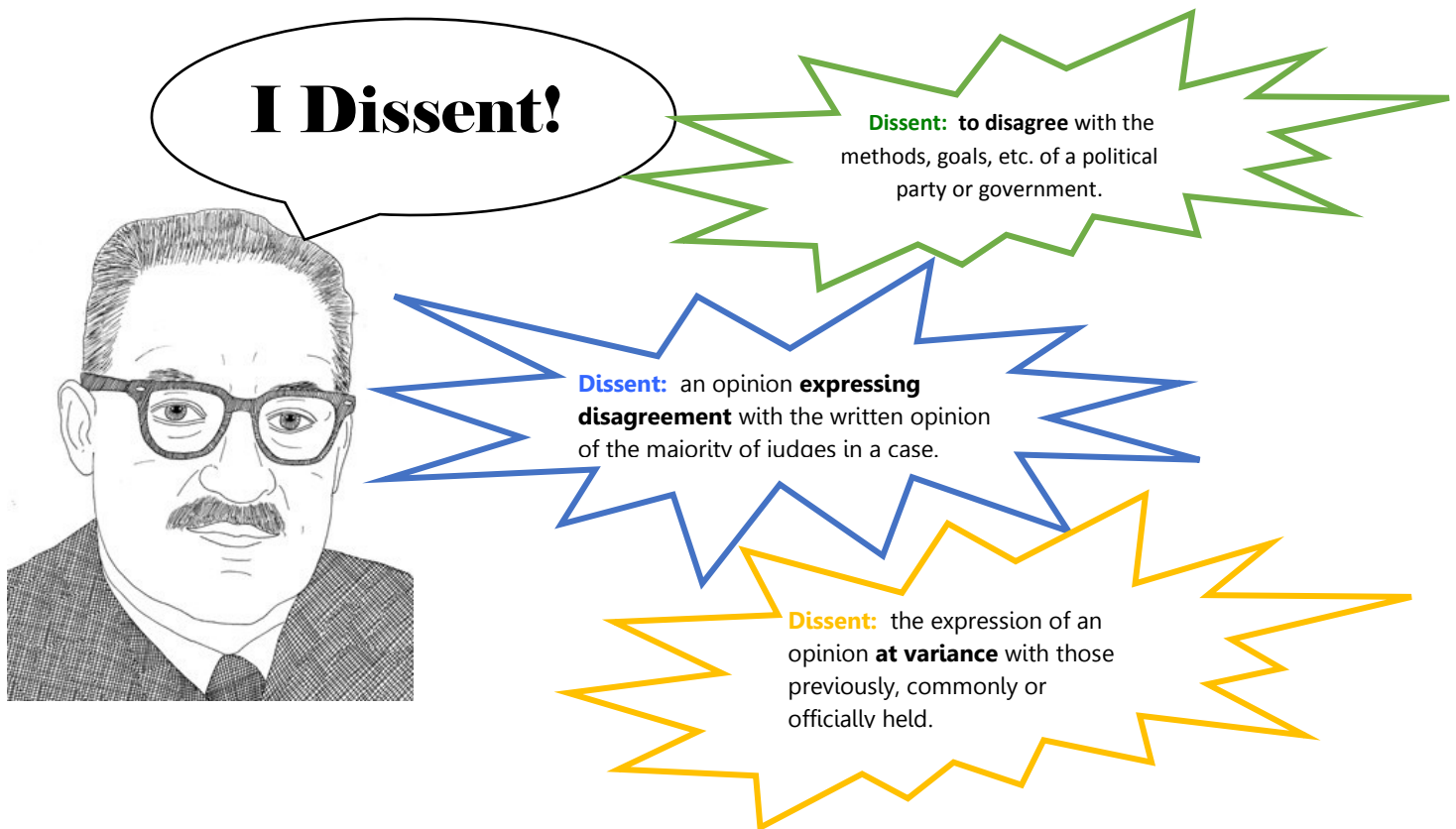


THE POWER OF DISSENT



Justice Thurgood Marshall, the first African American Justice of the US Supreme Court, wrote more dissents (363) than majority opinions (322). His dissenting opinions addressed many important issues that still face us today, explaining in clear and direct language how the lives of all people – particularly vulnerable people – would be impacted by majority opinions to which he dissented.

SEEKING: Spoken word performances by high school or middle school students about what it means to dissent, the power of dissent, and/or Justice Thurgood Marshall's dissenting opinions.

AWARDS: Chosen students will perform at the King County Superior Court Thurgood Marshall Assembly to take place at RAINIER BEACH COMMUNITY CENTER, APRIL 23, 2018, FROM 5:30 TO 7:30 PM, and will receive prizes worth \$50 to \$100.

SUBMISSIONS: With Justice Marshall in mind, performers are encouraged to prepare a spoken word presentation that addresses the importance and power of dissent. **Video or audio submissions for consideration should be sent to courtcommunity@kingcounty.gov by April 2, 2018.** Please include your name, age, grade, school, and contact information. Decisions as to who will be part of the presentation will be made by no later than **April 9, 2018.**

Submission Information:

This information is provided to assist with submissions for participation in the King County Superior Court's Justice Thurgood Marshall Assembly on April 23, 2018 at the Rainier Beach Community Center from 5:30 to 7:30 PM. **By April 2, 2018**, please submit audio or video spoken word performances to courtcommunity@kingcounty.gov, along with the following information about you:

- Name
- Age and Grade
- School
- E-mail address (can be a parent's or teacher's)
- Telephone number (can be a parent's or teacher's)

If you experience any difficulties with submission, please contact Judge John McHale at mchale.court@kingcounty.gov. Selected students will be notified by **April 9th**.

More about Thurgood Marshall and dissent

In our justice system, a dissenting opinion (or dissent) is an opinion in a case written by one or more judges expressing disagreement with the written opinion of the majority of judges of the court from which the opinion is issued. The power of dissent reaches far beyond court opinions. The ability to dissent is protected in the First Amendment of our United States Constitution and in Article I, Section 5 of our Washington State Constitution.

Justice Thurgood Marshall (July 2, 1908 – January 24, 1993) served as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States from October 1967 until October 1991. Justice Marshall was the Court's first African American Justice. Over his 24 years on the United States Supreme Court, Justice Marshall wrote more dissenting opinions (363) than majority opinions (322). His dissenting opinions addressed many important issues that still face us today. In his dissents, Justice Marshall explained in clear and direct language how lives of all people, particularly vulnerable people, would be impacted by majority opinions to which he dissented.

Thurgood Marshall said this about the importance of dissent:

I wish I could say that racism and prejudice were only distant memories. We must dissent from the indifference. We must dissent from the apathy. We must dissent from the fear, the hatred and the mistrust. We must dissent from a nation that has buried its head in the sand, waiting in vain for the needs of its poor, its elderly, and its sick to disappear and just blow away. We must dissent from a government that has left its young without jobs, education or hope. We must dissent from the poverty of vision and the absence of moral leadership. We must dissent because America can do better, because America has no choice but to do better.

With Justice Marshall in mind, performers are encouraged to prepare a spoken word presentation that addresses the importance and power of dissent, preferably regarding an issue that Justice Marshall addressed that still confronts us today.

Quotations about dissent: from Leonardo da Vinci to Common

“Nothing strengthens authority so much as silence.” — **Leonardo da Vinci**

“It is the first responsibility of every citizen to question authority.” — **Benjamin Franklin**

“The strongest bulwark of authority is uniformity; the least divergence from it is the greatest crime.” — **Emma Goldman**

“Those who profess to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation, are people who want crops without ploughing the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning; they want the ocean without the roar of its many waters. The struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, or it may be both. But it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.” — **Frederick Douglass**

“If there is anything that links the human to the divine, it is the courage to stand by a principle when everybody else rejects it.” — **Abraham Lincoln**

“That community is already in the process of dissolution where each man begins to eye his neighbor as a possible enemy, where non-conformity with the accepted creed, political as well as religious, becomes a mark of disaffection; where denunciation, without specification or backing, takes the place of evidence; where orthodoxy chokes freedom of dissent.” — **Judge Learned Hand**

“Never be afraid to raise your voice for honesty and truth and compassion against injustice and lying and greed. If people all over the world...would do this, it would change the earth.” — **William Faulkner**

“I love America more than any other country in the world and, exactly for this reason, I insist on the right to criticize her perpetually.” — **James Baldwin**

“Unthinking respect for authority is the greatest enemy of truth” — **Albert Einstein**

“Without debate, without criticism no administration and no country can succeed and no republic can survive.” — **John F. Kennedy**

“The right of dissent, or, if you prefer, the right to be wrong, is surely fundamental to the existence of a democratic society. That’s the right that went first in every nation that stumbled down the trail toward totalitarianism.” — **Edward R. Murrow**

“If you believe in your heart that you are right, then you must fight with all your might to do it your way. Only dead fish swim with the stream all the time.” — **Linda Ellerbee**

“To protest against injustice is the foundation of all our American democracy.” — **Thurgood Marshall**

“My advice, as in everything, is to read widely and think for yourself. We need more dissent and less dogma.” — **Camille Paglia**

Significantly, I learned that any progressive political movement grows and matures only to the degree that it passionately welcomes and encourages, in theory and in practice, diversity of opinion, new ideas, critical exchange, and dissent.” — bell hooks

“Now I think that a true liberal will always prioritize individuals over the group, will always prioritize heresy over orthodoxy, will always prioritize the dissenting voice over the status quo.” — Maajid Nawaz

“You can have all the money in your hands
All the possessions anyone can ever have
But it's all worthless treasure, true worth is only measured
Not by what you got, but what you got in your heart
You can have, you can have everything
What does it, what does it mean?
It all means nothing
If you don't stand up for something” — Common (Lonnie Rashid Lynn), Diane Eve Warren,
Cassandra Monique Batie

Links to Thurgood Marshall dissenting opinions

San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez, 411 U.S. 1 (1973):

https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/411/1#writing-USSC_CR_0411_0001_ZD2

Dandridge v. Williams, 397 U.S. 471 (1969):

https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/397/471#writing-USSC_CR_0397_0471_ZD1

Beal v. Doe, 432 U.S. 438 (1977): <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/432/438/>

Harris v. McRae, 448 U.S. 297 (1980): https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/448/297#writing-USSC_CR_0448_0297_ZD1

Clark v. Community for Creative Nonviolence, 478 U.S. 288 (1984):

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/468/288>

Awards/Honoraria

Awards will be in the form of gift cards between \$50 and \$100 purchased with funds donated privately by individual judges. Awards are not provided with public funds.