



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: **September 4, 2007**  
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### **CHARLES HAMILTON HOUSTON INSTITUTE FOR RACE & JUSTICE AT HARVARD LAW SCHOOL CONVENES PANEL DISCUSSION ON SEATTLE & LOUISVILLE SCHOOL RACE CASES**

Yesterday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>, would have been the 112<sup>th</sup> birthday of Charles Hamilton Houston, one of the great lawyers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, who dedicated his life to using the law as a tool to reverse the unjust consequences of racial discrimination.

This week, as millions of children return to school from their summer vacations, the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice (CHHIRJ) at the Harvard Law School will convene leading civil rights litigators, political strategists and scholars to discuss the impact of a recent Supreme Court decision (*Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School Dist. No. 1*) on equal opportunity in public education and the future of civil rights in the United States. The panel of experts will not only explore the implications of Parents Involved, but point to promising avenues that might improve life chances for young people in our nation.

The High Court's consolidated ruling on two well-publicized cases from Louisville and Seattle limited the ability of local schools to design voluntary desegregation plans aimed at achieving racial diversity. As a result, this fall, hundreds of educators are being forced to design new desegregation plans. The decision has confused many educators because, while striking down the desegregation plans in place in Louisville and Seattle, the majority of Justices nonetheless affirmed the compelling interest of maintaining racially diverse schools. Justice Kennedy's opinion, in particular, implored litigators, activists, educators, scholars and elected leaders to come together to construct new and creative policies to reduce segregation and combat racial isolation in schools. Yet it is still unclear to many exactly what practices, policies and programs are still legal in light of the new restrictions.

This panel discussion is free and open to the public, and takes place on Thursday, September 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm in the Ames Courtroom in Austin Hall, on the campus of Harvard Law School. It will follow a private, day-long meeting, convened by CHHIRJ, of leading civil rights litigators, representatives from national civil rights and educational organizations, political strategists, and community advocates. The event will also include opening remarks by Elena Kagan, Dean and Charles Hamilton Houston Professor of Law at Harvard Law School, as well a portrait unveiling and birthday commemoration in honor of Charles Hamilton Houston.

Those interested in attending may register online at <http://www.charleshamiltonhouston.org> or call 617-495-8285 to reserve a seat, as capacity is limited.

A complete listing of the details of the event is provided below:

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**Thursday, September 6<sup>th</sup> 2007**

**5:00 PM**

Ames Courtroom, Austin Hall, Harvard Law School  
1515 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02138

**Will the Quest for Color-Blindness Cloud Our Vision?: Deconstructing the Seattle and Louisville School Race Cases**

Featuring:

- **Remarks by Elena Kagan**, Dean and Charles Hamilton Houston Professor of Law, Harvard Law School
- **Portrait Unveiling and Birthday Commemoration of Charles Hamilton Houston** (September 3, 1895 - April 22, 1950)
- **Remarks by Charles Hamilton Houston, Jr.**, Son of Charles Hamilton Houston, and Lecturer, Department of History & Geography, Morgan State University
- A Panel Discussion with:
  - **Anurima Bhargava**, Director, Education Group, NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund
  - **Nadine Cohen**, Staff Counsel, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law of the Boston Bar Association
  - **Dennis Parker**, Director, Racial Justice Program, American Civil Liberties Union
  - **Hilary O. Shelton**, Director, Washington Bureau, NAACP (invited)
  - **Cynthia Valenzuela**, Director of Litigation, Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF)
  - Moderator: **Professor Charles J. Ogletree, Jr.**, Founding & Executive Director, Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race & Justice

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Established in the fall of 2005 at Harvard Law School by Professor Charles J. Ogletree, Jr., the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice (CHHIRJ) seeks to honor the extraordinary contributions of one of the great lawyers of the twentieth century. Charles Hamilton Houston dedicated his life to using the law as a tool to reverse the unjust consequences of racial discrimination. CHHIRJ is committed to marshalling the resources of Harvard and beyond to continue his unfinished work.

**PHOTOS, BIOS & MORE INFORMATION AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST  
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