

**How Clarence Thomas Erected a Fresh Hurdle for Black Students**



Affirmative action policies in college admissions were effectively barred on a systemic scale. This decision significantly affects Black students, particularly in shaping their college admissions essays. The ruling places a burden on these students to prove the effects of racism in their lives, leading to an emphasis on narratives of individualism and triumph over racial hardships.

Justice Clarence Thomas, known for his sharp ideological shift over the years, played a prominent role in this decision. Thomas's experiences at the College of the Holy Cross and Yale Law School contributed to his resentment towards affirmative action policies. He adopted the belief that such policies undermined the merits of Black students and disregarded the historical harms faced by Black people. This perspective strongly influences Thomas's judicial opinions.

While the Supreme Court ruling bans affirmative action programs, it does not entirely prohibit schools from considering how race affected an applicant's life. As a result, the burden now falls on Black students to prove the effects of racism in their college essays. This shift may lead to an increasing number of applicants telling stories of individualism, resilience, and triumph over racial hardships, aligning with Thomas's narrative of personal success without reliance on race-conscious policies.

Interestingly, research indicates that these narratives of triumph and individualism align with what predominantly white colleges reward in Black applicants' essays. Admissions officers have been found to penalize applicants who discuss organized Black resistance to racial domination or highlight structural racism. Instead, they favor essays that resemble Thomas's depiction of himself, emphasizing personal triumph over adversity. This preference reinforces a narrow view of Black experiences and penalizes discussions of racism as a product of white political and economic power.

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In contrast, white students are not pressured to frame their success within the context of their racial advantages. They do not face scrutiny for attending all-white K-12 schools or growing up in segregated neighborhoods. These unearned advantages are not seen as obstacles to their academic merits. This disparity perpetuates a racial divide in which Black students must prove their worthiness while their white counterparts are not required to account for their privileges.

The Supreme Court's decision to strike down affirmative action policies erodes one of the few successful efforts at racial redress in the United States. These policies were designed to address historical wrongdoings and provide opportunities for marginalized groups, particularly Black Americans, who have been affected by systemic injustices such as Jim Crow, redlining, and segregation.

With the ban on affirmative action, Black students will now have to make individual cases for their resilience over racial hardships to be considered worthy of admissions. This places the burden on them to conform to a narrative of exceptionalism and individualism, further undermining the original intent and legacy of affirmative action.

The recent Supreme Court ruling has profound implications for Black students and their college admissions essays. The burden to prove the effects of racism now falls on individual applicants, resulting in narratives of personal triumph and resilience. This shift undermines the intention of affirmative action and perpetuates a racial divide in the evaluation of worthiness for college admissions.

**Don't be a silent ninja! Let us know your thoughts in the comment section below.**