

A collage of diverse people, including a man and woman walking, a child on a bicycle, a man with glasses looking at a laptop, a woman with curly hair, a young girl with braids, and a young man in a suit.

SEF

SOUTHERN  
EDUCATION  
FOUNDATION

SOCIAL JUSTICE

THE  
LYNN  
WALKER  
HUNTLEY

FELLOWSHIP

*“We need all big minds and hearts  
engaged in the search for constructive solutions.  
The greatest failing is indifference to the problem.”*

LYNN WALKER HUNTLEY





# A Nation Ready for Change

The Southern Education Foundation (SEF) was established 154 years ago to support America's newly emancipated population's pursuit of education. The obstacles facing students of color and students from low-income families, however, diminished little with the passage of time. Even with the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954 that ended segregation and a subsequent multitude of federal and state reform efforts, the ideal of education as the equalizer of opportunity remains unrealized.

Now, our country is experiencing a racial reckoning, and obstacles to opportunity have grown exponentially. In early 2020, COVID-19 arrived on America's shores. It has widened a divide of racial and economic inequities into a chasm, with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reporting that the disease has killed Blacks and Latinos at a rate nearly three times higher than that of Whites.

When it comes to education, school closures in response to COVID have seen our most vulnerable students lose ground they may never recover. The closures have affected over 20 million of these students in the 17 states covered by SEF; a majority live in poverty, and many of their parents are not home enough to help them navigate online lessons. The learning loss caused by COVID is projected to

result in Black students earning nearly \$90,000 less over the course of their lifetimes compared to a \$54,000 loss for White students (Dorn and Hancock, *COVID-19 and Student Learning in the United States*, 2020). Many students are not getting schooled at all due to the digital divide. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, about one in five African American children ages 3-18 and families earning less than \$40,000 per year have no access to the internet at home.

Racial divides in our nation do not stop with education. Police brutality against African Americans is an ongoing issue that came to a head on May 25, 2020 when George Floyd, a 46-year-old Black man, was killed by a Minneapolis police officer who held his knee on Floyd's neck for nine minutes. The video sparked protests across America and called attention to other incidents of police violence, including the killing of Breonna Taylor, as Black parents demanded that their children should not have to walk down the street fearful of being accosted by law enforcement. These incidents are further examples of how the criminal justice system has been tilted against African Americans, including African American students: Some 70,000 students overall—predominantly African American males jailed for minor offenses—are in police custody on any given day, disrupting their lives and depriving them of the schooling they need for success in life.

Our children need help. They need more resources. They need adults fighting for educational justice more now than ever. These needs are why SEF is establishing a \$4 million endowment to fund the Lynn Walker Huntley Social Justice Fellowship. An esteemed Fundraising Committee has been assembled to help with establishing this fellowship that will develop young attorneys committed to the fight for education equality.

## Fundraising Committee:

### Alvin Brown

Former Mayor,  
Jacksonville, Florida

### Karen Baynes Dunning

Former Interim  
President, Southern  
Poverty Law Center

### Wade Henderson

Immediate Past  
President, Leadership  
Conference on Civil  
and Human Rights

### Margaret Huang

President & CEO,  
Southern Poverty  
Law Center

### Sherrilyn Ifill

President, NAACP  
Legal Defense and  
Educational Fund, Inc.

### Gay Johnson

### McDougall

Distinguished  
Scholar-in-Residence,  
Leitner Center on  
International Law  
and Justice, Fordham  
University Law School

### Deval Patrick

Former Governor,  
Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts

### Raymond C. Pierce

President & CEO,  
Southern Education  
Foundation

### Anthony Romero

Executive Director,  
American Civil Liberties  
Union

### Ted Shaw

Julius L. Chambers  
Distinguished  
Professor of Law and  
Director of the  
UNC Center for Civil  
Rights

### Michael W. Tyler

Partner, Kilpatrick  
Townsend & Stockton  
LLP

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# A Trailblazing Fighter

Lynn Walker Huntley was the kind of fighter that our children and our country need.

In 2002, she became the first female president of the Southern Education Foundation, serving until her retirement in 2010. During her tenure, Walker Huntley directed a groundbreaking study comparing race and inequality in Brazil, South Africa, and the United States. She edited the final report and personally presented it to President Nelson Mandela of South Africa. She also sought a constitutional guarantee of a public education at the state and federal levels.

Walker Huntley, who passed away in 2015, was a force for civil rights throughout a career dating back to the 1970s. She began as a lawyer with the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund in New York, where she focused on cases involving the abolition of the death penalty, prisoner rights and education desegregation. She was part of the legal team representing the plaintiffs in the landmark *Furman v. Georgia* case, in which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the death penalty was unconstitutional.

She went on to work for the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, where she became section chief and deputy assistant attorney general. She directed a trial section to vindicate the rights of

institutionalized persons, and she exercised oversight of sections concerned with legislative affairs, employment, housing, federal regulatory and budgetary matters.

She joined the Ford Foundation in 1982, eventually heading that foundation's Civil Rights and Social Justice Program, which funds human rights organizations across the globe. The division focused on minority and women's rights, refugee and migration issues, legal services for the poor, minorities and media, and coordination of related field office activities.

Her tenure at the Ford Foundation was highlighted by securing financial support for *Eyes on the Prize*, the award-winning 14-part documentary series about the history of the civil rights movement that aired on PBS in 1987 and 1990. She authored several *Beyond Racism* reports and served as an editor of two related books, *Tirando a Mascara* (Removing the Mask) and *Race and Inequality in South Africa, Brazil and the United States* (2001).

Walker Huntley received many honors, including the Thurgood Marshall Award of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, the Lucy Terry Prince Award of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the Jean Mayer Global Citizenship Award of Tufts University, and the Unsung Heroine



Award of the Atlanta Chapter of 100 Black Women. Walker Huntley served as vice chair of the Board of Directors of CARE USA, the world's largest development nonprofit organization; and a member of the Board of Directors of the Jesse Ball duPont Fund and the Marguerite E. Casey Foundation.

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# Advancing Equity in Education since 1867



**The South is home to 39%**

of all K-12 students, more than half of whom are students of color and more than 3.5M of whom live in rural communities.

The richest 25% of school districts spent  
**\$1,500 more per student**  
than the poorest 25% of school districts



## High-poverty schools



serving primarily students of color more than doubled between 2000 and 2014.

## Learning loss due to COVID



Black students are projected to earn nearly \$90,000 less over the course of their lifetimes compared to White students who will earn \$54,000 less over their lifetimes.

SEF has sought to advance equity and excellence in education in the South for African American students and students from low-income families since its founding in 1867 in the aftermath of the Civil War and the end of slavery. Its efforts span 17 Southern states (Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia).

SEF works on behalf of our most marginalized students, conducting research and sharing the results and related recommendations with policymakers, as well as supporting educational leaders. Without adequate funding for SEF and its initiatives, efforts in the South would be hamstrung just as the opposing forces are gaining renewed strength. These efforts include:

- **Government Affairs and Advocacy:** SEF tackles educational challenges by working in partnership with a range of organizations and community leaders to advance policies that address education inequity. SEF also develops and shares resources that address such inequity with educators and advocates.
- **Leadership Development:** Icons such as W.E.B. DuBois are among the leaders SEF supported through fellowships in the early 20th century. Today, SEF still believes that developing leadership and creating a cadre of change agents who can transform education and the lives of those furthest from opportunity is key to helping disadvantaged students in the South.
- **Research:** SEF analyzes critical issues and disseminates findings and best practices to leaders and policymakers who are in the position to act and implement changes to combat these challenges. It delivers thought leadership that keeps equity at the forefront of the education debate.

*“Lynn Walker Huntley’s vision, tenacity, and humanity showed all of us working at the Legal Defense Fund how to advocate for clients. She made sure that the journey to assure quality education without regard to race, wealth or zip code was generational work.”*

Deval Patrick

Former Governor, Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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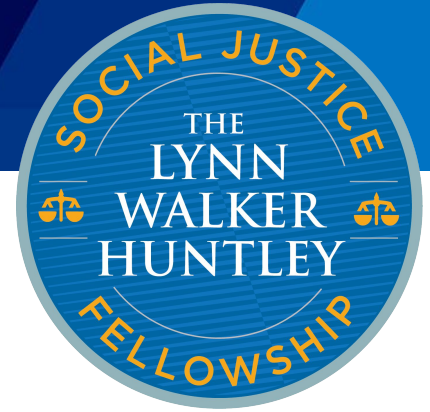
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# The Fellowship



Developing new legal talent in the civil rights arena is critical, particularly in the South, where education funding and access to opportunity are a constant struggle for students of color and students from low-income families. Per-pupil expenditures are lower in Southern states compared to other parts of the country. Schools that serve the majority of underserved students are poorly resourced, and there are ongoing efforts to direct scant public education funds to private schools through vouchers and tax credits.

The Lynn Walker Huntley Social Justice Fellowship will help address these issues by giving attorneys the skills and experience necessary to advance education equity through litigation and policy. Fellows will receive ongoing professional development and mentorship through a partnership with the Southern Education Foundation and the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). The goal of the fellowship is to build a pool of in-house legal talent who can effectively champion equitable educational opportunities for young students of color and those who come from low-income families in the South.

SEF is proud to partner with SPLC in this effort to develop legal talent focused on civil rights. SPLC, founded in 1971, works in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements, and advance

the human rights of all people. Bound by their unwavering commitment to equity, particularly in the South, SEF and SPLC are collaborating on this important new initiative to honor the rich legacy of SEF's past president, Lynn Walker Huntley, support a pipeline of new leaders to ensure equity in education for children in the South, and provide strategic support for the larger civil rights community.

While the work of both organizations spans the southern region, their collaborative efforts will focus primarily on states where there is synergy among SEF and SPLC's current efforts: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

The Fellow will contribute to education advocacy efforts across the southern states by conducting legal research and analysis, drafting memos, participating in ongoing litigation and amicus efforts, and issuing public comments on proposed regulations. The Fellow will gain exposure to a broad array of education equity issues, with a particular focus on constructive solutions to eliminate disparities in public education funding to ensure all students have the resources needed to learn, grow, and thrive. This includes integrated strategies and solutions to address fair school funding within and across southern states and ensuring resources are devoted to solutions that create equitable educational opportunities.

The role of the 2022-2024 Lynn Walker Huntley Social Justice Fellow will include:

- providing strategic thinking to help SEF network on the local, state, regional, and national levels on issues of educational equity
- researching and identifying education issues to advance through litigation or through policy efforts at both the regional and national level
- holding trainings to build the capacity of SEF staff and stakeholders to advocate for students' civil rights in education
- producing a final report or project demonstrating progress on a key civil rights issue in education that resulted from SEF's increased capacity

Fellows may be eligible for Public Service Loan Forgiveness, a government program offering federal student loan forgiveness after 10 years of public service employment.

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# Securing the Future

Now more than ever, our children need advocates fighting for educational justice. This need is why SEF is raising funds to build a \$4 million endowment to support the Lynn Walker Huntley Social Justice Fellowship. Contributions will support bringing in a first-year attorney for a two-year fellowship in social justice and civil rights. This initiative is part of a larger \$20 million campaign to benefit SEF overall.

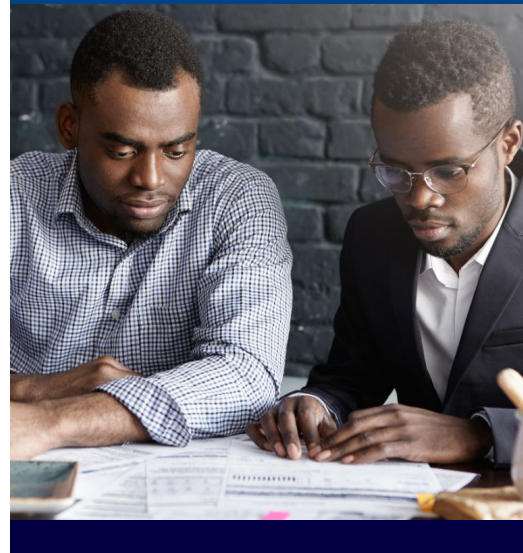
Endowed Fellowships 2 year fellowships @ \$250K (\$125,000 annually)	\$3MM
Marketing/Outreach (\$25K annually for 20 years)	\$500,000
Program Evaluation (10 year evaluation)	\$500,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4MM</b>

***“Lynn Walker Huntley was a trailblazer and a role model for civil rights attorneys and social justice philanthropist.***

***This fellowship honors her by providing young attorneys who will undertake the education equity and school desegregation work to which she was committed”***

Sherrilyn Ifill

President, NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund, Inc.



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**Michael W. Tyler**

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LLP

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