

## John Marshall

Born in a log cabin in the wilderness on the Virginia frontier on September 24, 1755, John Marshall spent the early part of his career as a practicing lawyer and political leader. Prior to his acceptance of the chief judicial post in the federal government, Marshall had been an occasional officeholder, but had generally declined to enter upon public office despite continued urging to do so. Indeed, in 1778 he refused a nomination to become Associate Justice of the Supreme Court and subsequently declined a nomination as Secretary of War. However, in 1800 John Marshall did accept the appointment of President John Adams to become Secretary of State and in 1801 the nomination as the fourth Chief Justice of the United States, holding both positions until the end of the Adams Administration.

John Marshall is credited with establishing the foundations for American constitutional law during his 34 years as Chief Justice. Legal scholars have delineated several threads of jurisprudence running through Marshall's constitutional thought. Primarily, he was a man who strongly supported the concept of federal supremacy over the states. Next, his strong sense of an ordered and orderly society required that property rights be secured to individuals by their governments, and that should the states trespass upon those rights of their citizens, they might properly be restrained from doing so in accordance with the federal constitution. Finally, all governments, both state and federal, had to be

effective if they were to gain respect and secure to their peoples the peace and prosperity which the Founding Fathers had intended. The most noteworthy decisions written by John Marshall predicated on these principles included Marbury v. Madison, McCulloch v. Maryland, Dartmouth College v. Woodward, and Gibbons v. Ogden.

Chief Justice John Marshall died while in office on July 6, 1835, just three months short of his 80th birthday. He is buried at Shockoe Hill in Richmond, Virginia.