The Gregory H. Swanson Award recognizes a University of Virginia School of Law student or students who demonstrate standards of character and conduct exemplified by Gregory Hayes Swanson. Swanson was the first Black student to attend the Law School and the University of Virginia in any school. Among other qualities, Mr. Swanson modeled by his example courage, perseverance, and a commitment to justice.

Mr. Swanson, who had already earned his law degree from Howard University and was a practicing attorney, applied to the Law School for the 1950-51 term as an LL.M. degree candidate. The faculty of the Law School initially accepted him, but the University blocked his admission, stating: “The applicant is a colored man. The Constitution and the laws of the State of Virginia provide that white and colored shall not be taught in the same schools.”

Undaunted, Mr. Swanson sued the University in federal court in downtown Charlottesville. Civil rights legends Thurgood Marshall, Oliver Hill, Spottswood Robinson and Martin A. Martin of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDF) represented Mr. Swanson. A three-judge panel of the United States District Court ordered Mr. Swanson’s admission in *Gregory Hayes Swanson v. The Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia* (Sept. 5, 1950). Mr. Swanson thereafter completed coursework at the Law School.

This award commemorates Mr. Swanson’s accomplishment in integrating the University of Virginia at a time when state law and custom did not welcome him. We are grateful and proud to recognize his contribution to our law school and university community.

All currently enrolled law students are eligible regardless of background, including but not limited to race, national origin, citizenship, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, and political affiliation. The award includes a tuition grant of $2,000 and will be presented at an event commemorating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in January 2024.

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**REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Nominee: | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  |
|  | (type/print name) |  |
| 2. Nominated by: | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
|  | (type/print name) | (signature) |
|  |  |  |
|  | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  |
|  | (phone & email) |  |

3. Supporting letters:

Supporting letters from two persons who are University of Virginia School of Law students, faculty, staff, or alumni are required. They should know the nominee well. For example, a letter from a student who is well acquainted with the nominee is likely more helpful than one from a faculty member who is not. Generally, one of the two letters of support is written by the person making the nomination, but that is not required. However, the person making the nomination should arrange for the letters to be written and submitted.

***The selection committee will pay particular attention to letters that describe, in detail, personal*** ***qualities of the nominee with illustrations elaborating upon the nominee’s character and conduct*** rather than recitation of credentials already listed on a resume.

If further information is needed, please contact Megan Durkee in the Student Affairs Office (434-924-1173, Room SL109, [mdurkee@law.virginia.edu](mailto:mdurkee@law.virginia.edu)).

Supporting letters will be written by:

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(type/print name)

2.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(type/print name)

4. Resume:

The Selection Committee will obtain a copy of each nominee’s resume from the nominee.

**DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS AND LETTERS IS 5:00 P.M. ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2023.** Please submit all materials electronically, preferably in Word format, by e-mail to [mdurkee@law.virginia.edu](mailto:mdurkee@law.virginia.edu).