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Civil Rights Organization Requests Lloyd Gaines Case Reopened **By Christa Koskosky**

COLUMBIA, Mo. – This week, the FBI announced the reopening of suspicious death and missing person cases from the nation’s civil rights era – prior to December 1969. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) has requested the Lloyd Gaines case be included among them.

An announcement was made at the University of Missouri-Columbia by Angela Ciccolo, deputy general counsel for the NAACP. She said the FBI is reviewing the Gaines request.

“We gave the FBI a number of cases,” said Ciccolo, who spoke to students at the University’s School of Law. “I asked them to make sure the Lloyd Gaines case was added to the list. Justice has been a long time coming. To solve the Lloyd Gaines case, as well as the others, would help close open wounds and provide resolution.”

On Tuesday, the NAACP, National Urban League, Southern Poverty Law Center and other civil rights organizations asked federal authorities to reinvestigate dozens of cases. Although many are from the 1960s, Gaines’ case is one of the oldest that remains unsolved. He went missing in 1939 after leaving his fraternity house in Chicago to buy stamps. He never returned and has not been seen since.

During an era when many of the nation’s universities were segregated based on race, Gaines applied to the MU School of Law in 1936 and was denied admittance. He filed suit against the registrar of the law school and University of Missouri Curators. His lawsuit became one of the most important segregation decisions in the nation. In 1938, the Supreme Court ordered the state of Missouri to admit Gaines to MU or to provide him access to education at an institution of equal stature within Missouri’s border. This decision contributed significantly to the battle to end racial segregation in schools, which culminated in the 1954 landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Although Gaines never attended MU, his name is certainly recognized on campus. In 2001, MU’s black culture center was named the Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center. Two law school scholarships also have been established in his honor. Last May, Gaines was granted an honorary law degree posthumously.

“We recognize history, and clearly the University of Missouri-Columbia has separated itself from this period by working hard over the past 40 years to provide open access to all ethnic groups,” said Mike Middleton, MU deputy chancellor.