



Marylee Sara Jenkins, age 18

Welcome to the anniversary edition of **Let The Truth Be Told**. We, the editorial board, hope you have found each publication to be enlightening and informative.

Let The Truth Be Told is the brainchild of our Executive Editor, Dr. Marlene A. Saunders, as a result of her strong desire to have a newsletter focusing on the issues that face African Americans everywhere, particularly in Sussex County, Delaware, where there is a dire need to get the truth out to citizens, encouraging involvement in creating much needed change.

As this issue focuses on the influencers in the lives of our contributors, we found it very fitting for our opening article to focus on and **pay tribute to the major Influencer in Marlene A. Saunders's life, Marylee (Jenkins) Saunders**, the person who encouraged her to always **Let The Truth Be Told**.

“I can be changed by what happens to me. But I refuse to be reduced by it.”

Maya Angelou

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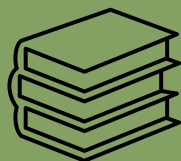


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Let The Truth Be Told (TM) is a quarterly newsletter.

Let the Truth Be Told is intended to give African Americans the opportunity to speak “truth to power” through media such as commentary, poems, history, and art, among others, which will be provided by parents, teachers, children, ministers, historians, and other citizens. This platform aims to transform our words into empowered activism.

We are seeking contributors to **Let the Truth Be Told**. If you feel you have something to say but do not believe you write well enough, don't let that stop you. Please submit what you want to say and you will be given support which will lead to your voice being heard. **Let the Truth Be Told!**

Submissions are reviewed by the editorial board and may be edited for brevity and clarification. We regret we cannot return any unsolicited articles, photos, or other materials.

LET THE TRUTH BE TOLD™

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Let The Truth Be Told

A Tribute to Its Influencer: Marylee Saunders

By Nicole Marie Saunders

Marylee Saunders



How would I describe my grandmother in one word? In today's vernacular it would be simple, Influencer! She did not have Facebook, Instagram or TikTok to grow followers. She had wisdom, respect, a network, and a wealth of knowledge. Despite what you saw, you had to know she was more than her body would reflect. She was stricken with polio at the age of 26 with four children, the youngest being only eight months old. She was in a wheelchair until she passed away, in 2012, at the age of 83.

up a book, attend a seminar and to seek out knowledge about our history. Thank you, Gram, for teaching us our history, because you knew if we didn't know, we would be destined to repeat it. Those life lessons were priceless. You taught us the importance of a good education and how to be the best we can be at anything we set out to do.



I'm thankful for being able to grow up with her example of how to work hard, persevere despite those who don't believe



tragedies and situations that would defeat the average person and continued to persevere through it all. She taught me so much about how to survive in this world, about being a strong woman and the meaning of family. For this and many more reasons, the #proudtobeSaunders was born. She will always be a legend to this family with whom we are so proud to be associated.

"If it's yours, no one can take it from you."

Mrs. Saunders ("Gram") was a woman of color, child, mother, grandmother, wife, entrepreneur, activist, educator, motivator, student, survivor, and a Child of God. Those traits shined through in all she did (Matthew 5:16) and even when the devil came to block and destroy, he didn't win. She had a mission and she set forth to see it through for her people and for her family. In fact, **Let The Truth Be Told** is the outgrowth of a lesson she gave her oldest child, my Auntie, Dr. Marlene Saunders. She always believed Black people needed to communicate the facts regarding the quest for civil rights and freedom as human beings through newspapers, newsletters, television, and radio. We did so until our media outlets (e.g., Ebony, Jet, Chicago Tribune) were unable to compete with mainstream media. I've told this story so many times before, that wheelchair didn't hinder her mission. If I had to look back on it now, it stood as a lesson for others.

in us and pursue our dreams the right way. Her entrepreneurial spirit and the belief we need to have our own, was infused in all her children. One of her main lessons was, "If it's yours, no one can take it from you."



Her willingness to give others a chance when doors were closed, taught us everyone has something to give to society and we can all contribute something if given the chance. We all make mistakes. This is why grace, and second chances are necessary. This doesn't mean we should be foolish or unwise, but if we aren't willing to help our neighbors, who will? She was such an advocate for youth, disadvantaged people, and her community. Although my grandmother was stricken with Polio at age 26, I am emboldened by the fact that a wheelchair never stopped her from getting what she wanted for herself and for her family. I often recall sitting back and watching the fireworks when others underestimated her because she couldn't walk.

Let The Truth Be Told, Marylee Saunders wasn't your average woman who allowed her circumstances to define who she was or paint the picture of who her family was destined to be because of it. When most people see Black woman they think sorrow, helplessness, and/or tragedy. Those who knew Mrs. Saunders, knew inspiration, strength, wisdom, and a great teacher. Don't ever develop an opinion by the surface appearance of ANYONE. Dig deep and live a life of curiosity, explore, and allow the truth to be told. You will find inspiration in people who may not look like you or be what society defines as able bodied, but be assured, everyone has value and brings value. Let the seeds planted by Mrs. Saunders grow as you shine light on all the issues facing us today, bring awareness and **Let The Truth Be Told**.



Growing up, she was an example of how to overcome anything life, or the devil, would throw at us as a people. My grandmother showed us how important it is to know our history as a people, one's family history and to seek out the truth for ourselves so WE can make and form our own opinions. She encouraged us to pick

My grandmother's start looked like so many who grew up in her era with similar circumstances. She had many more challenges which would have taken the average person out. Instead, she fought through medical conditions, family

Nicole Saunders is an entrepreneur and author



Nicole Saunders (l) & Dr. Marlene A. Saunders

African American Resilience

By Rev. Lawrence Livingston


Resilience -- the ability of a person to adjust to or recover readily from adversity, major life changes, or difficult life circumstances.

African Americans have been resilient people through the various eras of their historic journey all the way from the Motherland right up to the present day. This resilience and strength preserved Black people through the Ma'afa (The so-called Middle Passage—a Swahili word which means *the great tragedy*), the Holocaust of Enslavement, the Jim Crow era, the lynching culture of the early 20th Century, the Civil Rights movement, and right up to the present. Concepts like resilience, toughness, strength, or even resistance have been projected as concepts relating to white people, and rarely outside of Black discourse have these terms been used to refer to African Americans. However, the Black Experience in this country and their survival through centuries of inhumane conditions and circumstances is the sheer definition of resilience. Black resilience is the untold story of African American history.

Narratives of what happened in Black History often miss the point that African Americans survived—period! An Afrocentric virtue applied to our ancestors—those who lived and died in previous generations—is that despite some of the most unscrupulous circumstances forced upon them they were able to “deliver” the next generation. This delivery of subsequent generations has been overlooked in the Black history narrative, let alone the history of our nation. We are quick to honor the resilience and strength of the so-called *founding fathers*, for example, many of whom held men and women in captivity themselves. We tend to overlook the paradox of their words of freedom and justice, while at the same time these men held other humans captive. We discount the stories of the millions of people, who because of racism and white supremacy, survived the injustice and repression of that contradiction. That’s a part of Black history that must be told, and in fact, that is as much a part of the narrative of American durability and vigor as anything. The words of the nation’s founding documents, such as “We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men (and women) are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights. . .” and those who wrote them perhaps should be admired for their philosophical wisdom. However, the men

and women who survived the contradiction of those words should be admired as well. African American survival during years of our nation’s freedom for White people and slavery for Black people conundrum is the untold part of the story of America’s founding

We continue to talk about the presence and history of Black people as if it is an addendum to the American story.



Black resilience is the untold story of African American history.

It is not. If we **Let The Truth Be Told**, African American history is not part of the American story, it *is* the American story. The American exceptionalism we often boast about as a nation is not without the presence of Black bodies. It is not only because of the benefits of millions of people working at a zero-sum or low level of compensation for the last 400 years to make America the strongest nation in the world, but it is also the exceptionalism of Black Americans—a truly American story. There is so much left out of the American story when Black History is omitted or whitewashed. When we leave out that part of the American narrative, we are leaving out the millions who by their ingenuity, knowledge, and strength made this one of the greatest agricultural nations in the world. We leave out the Black contribution to our military in every American war, from Crispus Attucks being a leader in the fight for revolutionary freedom and independence from Britain to the more than 225,000 Black soldiers who fought with the Union Army to win the Civil War, to the Tuskegee Airmen who successfully escorted all 450 bombers in World War II, right up to the thousands who fought in the Vietnam War. We leave out the extraordinary personalities of American history like Sojourner Truth (Isabella Baumfree), Frederick Douglas, Harriet Tubman, Hiram Revels, Blanche Bruce, Peter

Spencer, Richard Allen, George Washington Carver, Ida B. Wells Barnett, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Dubois, Marcus Garvey, Medgar Evers, and the thousands more who have been the personifications of the American exceptionalism we boast about.

Black History, communicated with academic integrity and excellence, will highlight the resilience of African Americans, which is a shared narrative that must be told. The resilience of the millions of Americans living under the conditions of enslavement, Jim Crow segregation, and other forms of second-class citizenship, or worse, has been a true part of the American story that most do not even know about. Simply put, people of African descent in our nation have withstood 400 years of being maligned with a lifetime of captivity, minstrelsy and black-face depictions that defamed their character, Jim Crow laws, separate-but-(un)equal conditions, and yet they survived to deliver subsequent generations. **This is the very definition of resilience.**



Reverend Lawrence Livingston, D.Min. is Senior Pastor Emeritus of Mother African Union Church and Assistant Professor of Africana Studies at the University of Delaware.

“Grief and resilience live together.” Michelle Obama

How Influence and Resilience Got Me Here

By Michael Simzak

I am a Middle School Social Studies teacher. These are words I never thought I'd say and a title I'd never thought I'd have, let alone be proud of. I always wanted to be cool in Middle School, I just didn't think it would take 30 years to happen. I have taught Middle School social studies for the last five years and my journey to this point has been anything but straightforward. It has been triumphant, humbling, required faith, support, mentoring and resilience to reach this point, and I know I will go through and require the same as I move forward.



No surprise I became an educator because education is the “family business”. My great-grandmother was a teacher at a time when few, if any, Black women had a high school education, let alone a college degree. Both of my grandmothers were teachers, my father was a teacher, and my mother was a principal. My aunt was a professor of English who obtained her Doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania in the 1960s and taught along with her husband at Tennessee State. All of my aunts on both sides and many cousins were/are teachers. We teach, that's what we do. Given my family's history in education, I should have known I would one day be an educator, but like most children, I resisted the calling until it was clear I would not find the success or satisfaction I sought doing anything else.

As far back as I can remember, I have always had an interest in history. I dragged my family to Boston when I was interested in the American Revolution, Gettysburg when I went through my Civil War phase, the Renaissance Faire when I went through my medieval phase, and to DC when I went through my government phase. Despite my longtime love of history, I never saw that as a potential career path. I thought I would become an engineer until I took calculus and discovered that advanced math just didn't like me. My plan was to major in Political Science or Criminal Justice, followed by Law School. To that end, the first class I signed up for when I enrolled at Howard University was called ‘Ancient Law and Politics’. The idea that I could study ancient laws and political systems while fulfilling a graduation requirement was even enough to overcome the fact that the class met at 8:00 in the morning. The class was not actually about ancient laws or politics, but rather about Ancient Greek Rhetoric, and while the

material was not what I expected, the class taught me how to read and write, think critically about material and arguments, and most importantly, served as my introduction to the Classics department, which would become my home.

To say that my family was less than thrilled when I announced I intended to major in Classics would be putting it mildly. “What are you going to do with that?”, “how will you ever make money?”, “what happened to Law School?”, and “have you lost your mind?” were among a few of the questions that I was asked after I made my decision. I will admit that I did not have the most fully formed answers to those questions, but I had found a subject area, professors, and a group of fellow students who challenged me intellectually. While I did not know the exact endgame at the time, I knew my chosen course of study would prepare me to move forward.

One of my biggest challenges was given to me by my college mentor, Dr. Rudolph Hock, Chairman of the Classics Department. My assignment: a research paper that analyzed uses of Ancient Augustine imagery by Benito Mussolini to further fascist ideology. To complete the project, I was going to have to submit a paper to the College of Arts and Sciences Undergraduate Research Symposium. We worked on the paper for the entire year, interspersing discussions of complex texts like Ronald Syme's ‘The Roman Revolution’, with conversations about sports and life, while Dr. Hock tried to help me get through an ever-growing case of senioritis. Despite the many obstacles, completing that project remains one of my greatest accomplishments, as my paper won for the Division of Humanities. My perseverance had paid off. A few weeks later, my family and friends would look on as I graduated Phi Beta Kappa and Summa Cum Laude with a degree in classics. My grandfather, who was a huge influence on me but never one to pass out compliments, told me he was proud of me.

After Howard, I was fortunate to get a full fellowship to get a Masters Degree in history from Villanova University. Much like my experience at Howard, I was able to find a great group of professors who challenged me academically and mentored me. The lessons they taught have helped me in my own career. I likewise met a group of men and women who became the type of tight knit group one hopes to meet in graduate school. We would have weekly meetings in which we would discuss controversies and settle all the world's problems. Their collective influence to this day is a blessing.

Perhaps the most important opportunity graduate school provided me was the chance to live with my grandfather. I have always admired my grandfather, but



but spending that time with him afforded me time to get to know him differently. He was tough, and given where and when he grew up, he had to be. He was driven and he demanded excellence from his children and grandchildren. He had always been the quintessential *pater familias*, the true head of the household who influenced his entire family, both immediate and extended, as more of an Olympian Deity than an actual person. He was the reference point for whom I could become and showed me how I could have the opportunity to mold the future if I was willing to put the work in and suffer the slings and arrows the world would toss at me. During this time, I was able to see him as a man, as someone who laughed, loved, and cared. I saw him as someone who would counsel when needed, push when necessary, and celebrate triumphs when achieved. It was he who gave me the confidence to become a teacher after I other pursuits failed.

When I entered my classroom for the first time as a teacher in 2014, it was the first time that I had ever had my own



classroom. I remembered what my grandfather told me “You don't know what you don't know”, and I learned quickly that there was a lot I didn't know. I was teaching middle school social studies in an inner-city Catholic School in Washington, DC, and the amount I didn't know would have stunned a team of cart oxen in their tracks. But again, I was fortunate to have family to rely on. On this occasion, it was my mother, who was an administrator and who had decades of experience in education. I am a good soldier, a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom and I know how to put my head down and focus on accomplishing a mission, but this was unlike any other mission I had ever encountered. Every experience I had was a new one for me and I am still not 100% sure how I was able to make it through other than the fact that I knew I had my mother to lean on and to provide counsel when needed, and it was needed a lot. It was also during that time that I met the woman who would become my wife, who offered me unconditional and unwavering support as I continued my journey as an educator. Both of them are key to anything I have and will achieve. They encouraged me when an opportunity came to teach at a new school with a completely unfamiliar pedagogy and supported me as I learned my way.

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About Let The Truth Be Told

Let The Truth Be Told is intended to give African Americans the opportunity to speak “truth to power” through a variety of media including, but not limited to, commentary, essays, poems, history, and art. These truths may be provided by parents, teachers, students, ministers, historians, and any other citizens who wish to have their truth be heard. This platform aims to transform our words into empowered activism and describes a mobilized African American community which is actively involved in ensuring our liberation and our quest for equality in America. This also means energizing our family members, friends, church members and others to get involved in activities which are about shaping a democratic society equally open to all African Americans. More deeply, **Let The Truth Be Told** aims to encourage African Americans to participate as office holders, as well as to become outspoken attendees in town council meetings, general assembly sessions, school board meetings, and to be participants in all public venues. **Let The Truth Be Told** will make it abundantly clear the African American community is not stuck in the “victim mentality” and is quite willing and capable to contribute to all aspects of public service. **Let The Truth Be Told** will demonstrate, boost, and illustrate how, as was the case with our ancestors, our demand is not something for nothing. Our quest was, and still is, to be recognized as viable contributors and to have equal rights as human beings. Despite lynching, police brutality and the psychological trauma created by enslavement, African American

communities have built successful and profitable businesses, banks, schools and self-sustaining churches and we want/need to continue in these efforts by continuing to work together toward becoming even stronger. We can only become stronger by knowing and passing on the truth.

We are seeking contributors to **Let the Truth Be Told**. We are looking for people of all backgrounds to lend their truth and gain the opportunity for their truth to be heard. We invite you to submit narratives, essays, biographies, poems, artwork, etc. Even if you feel you have something to say, but do not believe you write well enough, don't let that stop you. Please submit what you want to say, and you will be given support which will lead to your voice being heard. **Let The Truth Be Told!**



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Resilience

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In conclusion, as I reflect on the path that has brought me to this point, Middle School Social Studies teacher and Director of Service Learning and Diversity, I am struck by the twists, turns, triumphs and misfortunes I have faced and the people who have been with me through them all. However, there is one force greater than all I must acknowledge and that is God. My relationship with God is an important part of my life and I realize that I have to trust God first, to put me where I need to be when I need to be there.



Through my journey, I have had to overcome many obstacles, but through the influences of my family, professors, mentors, friends, and God, I have experienced many achievements and successes, and through continued perseverance, I know I have many more to come.



Michael Simzak is a Middle School Social Studies teacher and a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



The Disruptive Possibilities of the Oral Narrative

By Darold Cuba

“The history of the United States is a history of settler colonialism—the founding of a state based on the ideology of white supremacy, the widespread practice of African slavery, and a policy of genocide and land theft”, writes Roxane Dunbar-Ortiz, in *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*. Those who seek history with an upbeat ending, a history of redemption and reconciliation, may look around and observe that such a conclusion is not visible, not even in utopian dreams of a better society. “The national mainstream narrative is “wrong or deficient,” she continues, “not in its facts, dates, or details but rather in its essence. Inherent in the myth we’ve been taught is an embrace of settler colonialism and genocide. The myth persists, not for a lack of free speech or poverty of information but rather for an absence of motivation to ask questions that challenge the core of the scripted narrative of the origin story. How might acknowledging the reality of US history work to transform society?”

Challenging the core of the scripted narrative of the original story created by settler colonial white supremacy, and the racism the mainstream media narrative promotes and justifies, is what the orality of the narratives from communities that are targeted in such ways exist as, and for. Oral history is endemic to the practices of indigenous communities worldwide and has become a useful methodology for safeguarding cultural traditions, knowledge, legacies, and existence, especially in the face of the genocidal extermination of indigenous people, and the inhumane practices Western colonizers carried out over the five hundred centuries of their existence. The oral narrative also serves as a stopgap for antiracism work, disrupting, dismantling, and eliminating the systemic, institutional, and structural results of white supremacy in the narrative, helping us to not only understand our own roots, but to also define and surface the legacies of our families, in order to actualize and restore what has been lost along the way.

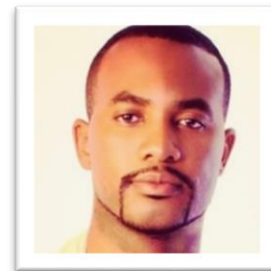
Through a multi-layered process of decolonization, indigenization, and unsettling oral history, in this particular framework, disrupts the colonial narratives of the “white gaze” (Toni Morrison), the “white imagination” (Claudia Rankine), and the “colonized mind” (Frantz Fanon) of the “racecraft” (Barbara and Karen Fields) that created these institutional racisms and systemic white supremacies that fail the “DuVernay Test” (Manohla Dargis) in the first place. Narrative sovereignty can be made manifest through cultural orality for those whose stories have been edited, distorted, and manipulated to fit a “white” gaze or

sensibility, as most stories in the West are - if they are not totally erased.

Toni Morrison used the phrase “*the white gaze*” to highlight the narrative, perspective, and lens of “*whiteness*” - the cultural, social, economic, and political results of *white supremacy* (the racialized systems of institutions the European colonial elite created to convince the European lower classes to leave their homelands to go work in the colonies as a step up to “a better life”). With the “*white imagination*”, Claudia Rankine builds upon this concept, denoting the construct of a fantasy land - a Matrix-like delusion - that white supremacy creates where “*white*” and “*not white*” are made real and literal, with murderous results for those branded “*not-white*.” Frantz Fanon’s writings on the “*colonized mind*” reflect the results and effects of such practice on not only those branded “not white,” but also those branded “white.” The [Barbara and Karen] Fields sisters’ research on “*racecraft*” illustrates the very environment that creates and sustains “*race*” has to be intentionally created, much like those that create the institutions and systems of witchcraft, in order for the belief in witchery and witches to be made real and actionable upon. *The New York Times* film critic Manohla Dargis coined the “*DuVernay Test*” as a metric of merely requiring that African Americans and other marginalized populations have fully realized lives in film, literature, and other mediums of storytelling, rather than serve as scenery in “white” stories.

I use these concepts to further elucidate the narrative that my ancestors have provided me orally, in griot fashion. My current project, *the Mapping Freedom initiative (tMFi)*, which aims to document all of the freedom colonies in the world, includes the stories of my own family as I explore the themes of resistance, community, ancestry, love, joy, and success, through the lens of international marronage, which defy mainstream narratives of people branded “Black” and the overall “Black Experience.” Historically suppressed by most mainstream media and academia as well, there is now a burgeoning interest in these stories, as the era of Trump and other white nationalist populist political leaders stroke the growing waves of white supremacy into international fires, as these were among the first communities, after the indigenous populations, to protect themselves from such colonizers and their ancestors. My work shares the findings from such practices, and also explore how GIS and historical geography methods can uncover the many other novel practices these communities created, instituted, and replicated.

I’m honored to continue the tradition of our ancestors, prioritizing the interiority of their lives through the centering of the oral tradition.



Darold Cuba is the founder of the Mapping Freedom initiative (tMFi), which maps all of the “freedom colonies” in the world using GIS technology, (and is

his doctoral dissertation), and Disrupt Wikipedia, a knowledge parity and open equity initiative that seeks to “disrupt, dismantle and eliminate the systemic and institutional bias and inequity in representation on Wikipedia platforms, the largest source of knowledge in the world,” that he founded while the Ivy League’s first Wikipedia Fellow, Resident and Visiting Scholar, at Columbia University (with Barnard College). He’s the HBCU/MSI Research Lead at the Harvard Project on Workforce, the inaugural Oral History Fellow at the Washington National Cathedral, serves on the NYC’s Cathedral of St. John the Divine’s Reparations and Racial Reconciliation committee, and is a founding member of the Episcopal Futures initiative, which seeks to transform the Anglican community into “new ways of being that are life-giving, cultivate a sense of belonging, and catalyze transformation.” A native of the Virginia Tidewater, and a direct descendant of the indigenous Native American, African and European communities that founded what eventually became the United States of America, he is a doctoral candidate in History at the University of Cambridge (St. John’s College), holds an MPA from Harvard, where he served as a Center For Public Leadership Fellow and the founding EIC of the AntiRacism Policy Journal (ARPJ), an MA (Oral History) from Columbia, and a BA (Theatre, Communications & PPE) from Temple.

“Failure will never overtake me if my determination to succeed is strong enough.”
Og Mandino

Making Life's Injustices Your Life's Work

By Penny Dryden

This article is dedicated to the entire staff at Let The Truth Be Told (LTTBT) Newsletter, for the profound courage and commitment to communities throughout Delaware and providing this opportunity and space for our authentic voices to be heard. Thank you and Congratulations on your one-year anniversary!!!



A life of injustices alone is not enough to make one an expert on the topic, nor does it lead to creating a huge Social and Environmental Justice corporation but combined with solid training and strong boundaries and relationships, it really does add magic to the role.

Most Black people have experienced injustice, at some level, one time or another in their lifetime, be it at home, in the community, at school or at work, but those Black people who grew up in predominately Black communities in Delaware have come face to face with racism much too often.

Every time we experience an injustice, particularly if it's a challenging one, we usually develop knowledge and/or skills that teach us how best to cope and/or manage in those circumstances. This makes us more prepared to approach a similar situation next time it occurs and can give us a great deal of empathy for others who are going through the same set of circumstances.

I know a young Black girl who grew up in a small community on the Route 9 Corridor in New Castle County, Delaware, where injustices happened so frequently it almost felt normal. The teachers at her school would always blame the Black students for many of the infractions at school even when the opposite was found to be true. White people, who owned most of the corner stores in the neighborhood often called them the little (N word) kids. She recalled when there was police presence in the community, it was never a friendly encounter which offered a sense of security or protection, but more of a fearful and traumatic experience that ended up with people running and screaming. She remembers asking her parents or other adults why white people treat Black people so badly. She never received a clear or direct response, but rather a warning not to talk about that issue. So, after graduating high school, the young girl decided to get away and attend Delaware State University, an HBCU where people looked like her and were more likely to treat her with the dignity and respect she desired. This experience prepared and inspired her

to seek work in city and county government, working in the substance abuse and violence prevention field and eventually establishing a nonprofit organization to address the social and environmental injustices she faced growing up. These injustices almost deprived her of the same basic rights and economic opportunities to obtain a thriving career as her white counterparts. I know this person very well because that person was me

I share this story to emphasize how magical Making Life Injustices Your Life Work can be. My life experiences with racism sent me on a journey to become the founder and CEO of Community Housing & Empowerment Connections Inc., a nonprofit that focuses on social and environmental justice. I developed the Community Outreach Vehicle, a mobile resource center which brings necessary resources to the doorstep of those most vulnerable. In addition, I established the first of its kind statewide Community Air Quality Monitoring Network. Finally, I implemented an evidence-based Community BreatheLife Campaign which increases awareness about the effects of air pollution on our health. These initiatives are led by one Black woman, 50 concerned residents of Delaware and supported by many other local, regional, and national partners.

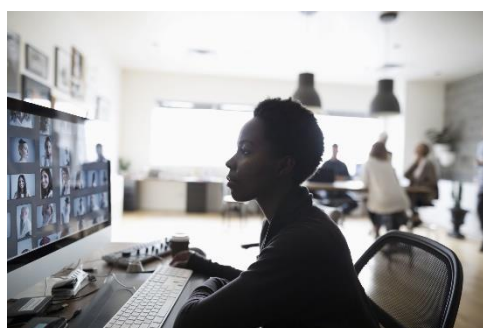


Penny Dryden is the Founder and CEO of Community Housing & Empowerment Connections Inc

The Power of Video

By Kyla Spruill

When thinking about what interests me, the first thing that comes to mind is video editing and video production; my family had a lot to do with that. Ever since I was younger, during family gatherings, I could usually be found shoving a camera in someone's face. I would always do it because I wanted to capture memories that we could keep for years to come, and that's kind of how the interest started. I remember being interested in learning about my ancestry and family history. I figured making videos was a form of keeping history alive so I could show my children what I did when I was younger.

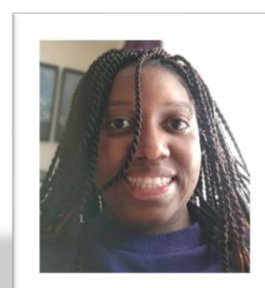


Another thing I am fascinated by in terms of videos is their ability to tell a story. I've always been an imaginative person, and I like the idea of creating a visual representation of a story or person in my head. Storytelling is a very powerful tool, and it connects people in ways they probably would have never thought about. Hearing about a person's journey and what they had to go through to get to where they are today can be very encouraging to many people. It encourages them to not give up or lose hope over a situation, because there could be a person out there who has gone through something worse. Diversity can also connect the whole idea around storytelling from films to American Cinema through the many actors of color who have

brought representation to the screen.

Including people from all backgrounds in films allows viewers to see themselves in the characters. For example, the movie "Black Panther" (which features a predominantly Black cast) inspired many people, especially children, who were proud to see a superhero who looked like them. In addition, biographical films, like "Harriet", give viewers insights into history, and should compel them to be grateful for the doors that have been opened and the freedoms that have been granted through the help of our ancestors.

Several African Americans have made significant contributions to the film industry. This includes Halle Berry (the first woman of color to be awarded Best Actress), Hattie McDaniel (the first African-American to win Best Supporting Actress), Denzel Washington, and Sidney Poitier, whose achievements are sure to endure for decades to come. It makes many African Americans believe anything is possible and they shouldn't have to worry about their skin color defining their level of success.



Kayla Spruill is a senior at Early College School at Delaware State University and is interested in studying journalism and video/film.

Children's Books About Resilience



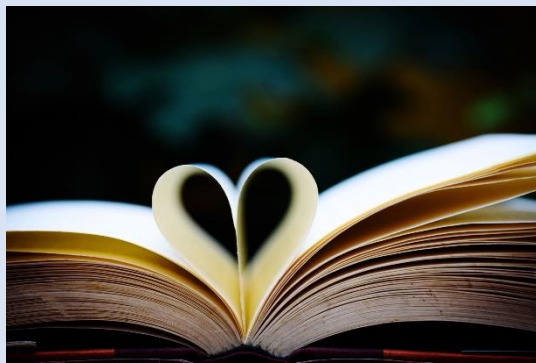
Ages 1-4

Otis	by Loren Long
The Most Magnificent thing	by Ashley Spires
Pete the Cat Books	by E. Litwin
Gossie: A Gosling on the Go	by Olivier Dunrea



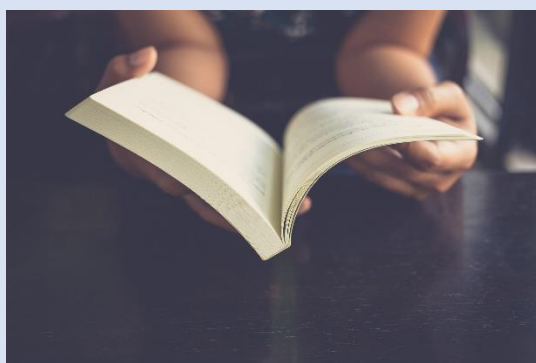
Ages 4-8

Fifty Cents and a Dream: Young Booker T Washington	by Jabari Asim and Bryan Collier
The Girl Who Lost Her Smile	by Karim Alrawi
Sad, the Dog	by Sandy Fussell and Tull Suwannakit
She Persisted: 13 Women Who Changed the World	by Chelsea Clinton and Alexandra Boiger
Violet the Piolet	by Steve Breen



Ages 9-12

A Long Walk to Water	by Linda Sue Park and Ginger Knowlton
The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind	by William Kamkwamba
El Deafo	by Cece Bell



12 and up

Hatchet	by Gary Paulson
Fast Talk on a Slow Track	by Rita Williams-Garcia
Out of My Mind	by Sharon M. Draper
Every Falling Star	by Sungju Lee and Susan Elizabeth McClelland

Quotes About Resiliency

“If there is no struggle, there is no progress.” - Frederick Douglass

“Fall seven times, stand up eight.” Japanese Proverb

“Do not judge me by my success, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again.” - Nelson Mandela

“Turn your wounds into wisdom.” Oprah Winfrey

“If you're going through hell, keep going” Winston Churchill

“The future rewards those who press on. I don't have time to feel sorry for myself. I don't have time to complain. I'm going to press on.” - Barack Obama

“Forgive yourself for your faults and your mistakes and move on.” - Les Brown

“Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.” - Arthur Ashe



The Reader's Corner

Spotlight on African American Authors and Literature

By Toni Barrett

Influence and resiliency are major themes in *The Violin Conspiracy*, a novel by Brendan Slocumb. This is the story of Ray McMillian, who as a young boy, received a beat-up violin from his grandmother which belonged to his great-great-grandfather, a slave. The violin was given to Ray's great-great grandfather by his master. Influenced by his grandmother, Ray took the old violin and was determined to become a world class violinist, which was no easy task given all the racism he had to endure, not to mention a very non-supportive mother who just wanted him to "stop making such a racket". Ray eventually discovers his violin is actually a rare and priceless Stradivarius which makes him even more determined to be a first-rate violinist. Once it is discovered that his violin is worth millions, his mother and family encourage him to sell it because they need the money, while the slave master's family turns up claiming the Stradivarius rightfully belongs to them. Both threaten to take the matter to court. Just before a renowned and difficult competition in Russia, the violin is stolen. Of course, Ray feels defeated, but his resilience kicks in and he becomes even more determined. He practices hours per day, every day, and goes to the competition using a lesser violin. The story deals with all of the roadblocks that are put in his way, and yet through perseverance and the continued influence his grandmother had on him, he does become a world class violinist. Read this very intriguing and informative book to find out if Ray is able to recover his stolen violin. The story is realistic fiction as the author, Brendan Slocumb, is an actual violinist who has had to endure tremendous racism trying to break into the traditionally white world of the classical violinist. This is a classic example of how influence and resilience helped shaped one Black Man's success.

Brendan Nicolaus Slocumb was born in California and was raised in Fayetteville, North Carolina. He graduated from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro where he was a violinist and violist, serving as concertmaster and principal violinist for the University Symphony Orchestra. He graduated with a degree in Music

The Violin Conspiracy

- by **Brendan Slocumb**

Education and taught music to students in grades K-12 at a variety of schools. Music has always played an important role in his life, and he views music as a life changer as he feels his study of music kept him out of prison. For this reason, he spends a large portion of his time influencing other children to study music, encouraging them to experience the joys and benefits music study has to offer. Brendan has performed with many symphony orchestras, including the Washington Metropolitan Symphony, the Prince George's Philharmonic and the Alexandria Symphony and he currently holds the position of Concert Master for the NOVA-Annandale Symphony Orchestra. Brendan enjoys his status as influencer in encouraging students to study music and teaches them, through his own examples of perseverance, to be resilient.



Toni Barrett is a public and private school educator and administrator.

If you have read a work of literature, fiction, or non-fiction, that you would like to recommend to our readers, we'd love to hear from you. After all, there is much *Truth to Be Told* through our literature past and present.

THERE'S MORE
to the Story



Ethel Payne: The First Black Woman of the Press

By Kathy Trusty

Ethel once said, "We are soul folks, and I am writing for soul brothers' consumption."

So, Who Was Ethel Payne?

Ethel Payne was born in 1911, in Chicago, Illinois. Her father, whose parents were once enslaved, was a Pullman Porter. Ethel wanted to go to law school and become a civil rights attorney, however her application to law school was refused because she was Black. She did not apply again.

In 1948, the United States Army began advertising for single women to organize social and recreational activities for enlisted men at home and abroad. Ethel applied for the position and in the spring of 1948 was hired to serve as Assistant Service Club Director for an all-Black unit in Japan.

When Ethel left for Japan in June, President Harry S Truman had not yet issued Executive Order 9981, which abolished segregation in the armed forces. The order was signed on July 26, 1948. General Douglas MacArthur did not agree with the order and refused to change his view. The army remained segregated, and it would take a few years before all branches of the military accepted it and worked to desegregate the armed forces.

While working for the army, Ethel witnessed the racism and discrimination with which Black soldiers had to contend. She wrote about what she observed, in her journal. Ethel shared her journal with Alex Wilson, a correspondent for the Chicago Defender, who shared it with his editor, Louis Martin.

The Chicago Defender was a Black-owned newspaper and had a large Black readership. The paper frequently criticized the military and its treatment of Black men and women.

Louis Martin was impressed with Ethel's writings and used her notes to publish articles about race and the treatment of Black soldiers. He then hired Ethel to report regularly on issues concerning Black Americans.

Ethel worked for The Chicago Defender for twenty-five years. She was their White House Correspondent and the first Black woman to be part of the White House Press Corp.

Ethel was known for asking hard questions. During one press conference she asked President Dwight Eisenhower about the treatment of Black Americans and if he supported having a law to ban segregation in interstate travel. The question made the president angry, and in his response, he referred to Black Americans as a "special interest group." That reference shocked other reporters in the room and their papers, including the New York Times, which ran an article with the headline: "Eisenhower No Champion Of Any Special Groups."

After that press conference, President Eisenhower stopped calling on Ethel. The White House was unhappy with her and she was unhappy with them. Ethel grew more aggressive in her articles. One article, in which she criticized the administration, ran with the headline: "Ike's Anti-Bias Record All Talk, No Action."

Ethel continued reporting about issues that were important to Black Americans. She interviewed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and reported on the Montgomery Bus Boycott. She wrote an article about Jeannetta Reese, a Black woman who gave in to white pressure and had her name removed from a lawsuit against the bus company. In the article Ethel wrote, "...what Jeannetta failed to recognize was that a phenomenal thing had happened in Montgomery."

In 1955, the Capital Press Club, the oldest African American communications organization in the nation, honored her with the Newswoman of the Year Award.

When nine Black students integrated the all-white Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, Ethel flew there to cover the story. Her first stop was to the city's Black business district to get Black citizens' views of what was happening in their state.

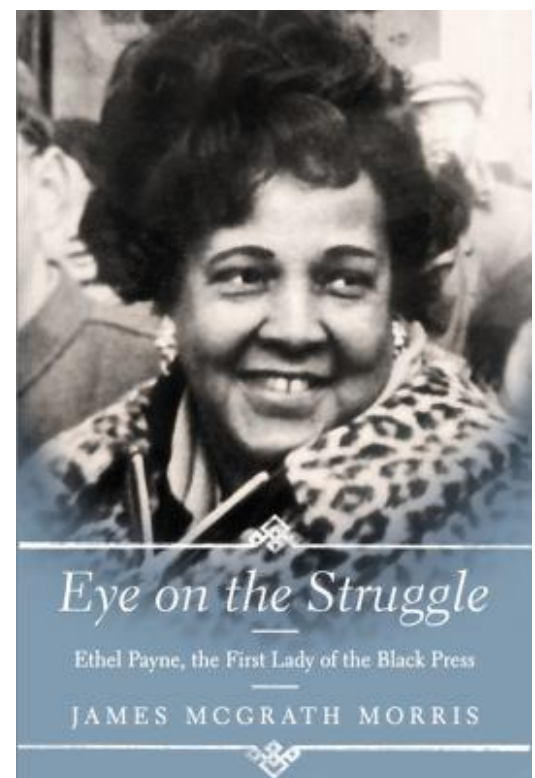
While in Arkansas, Ethel was invited to the home of Lee Lorch, a white math professor at a small Black college. Ethel had previously written articles about him being repeatedly fired because of his involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. Ethel had dinner with the family one evening. The next morning, he received an eviction notice.

Top Photo : Chicago Training School archives and is her senior graduation photograph.

Book Cover: Morris, James McGrath. Eye on the Struggle: Ethel Payne, The First Lady of the Black Press. New York, Amistad, 2015.

When President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Ethel was in the room. He gave her one of the pens used to sign the Act.

During Ethel's career as a journalist, she covered some of the biggest stories and events about Black America, including Brown v. Board of Education, the March on Washington, and the murder of Emmett Till.



After working for The Chicago Defender, Ethel became professor of journalism at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. Ethel believed Black journalists had to be more than reporters. She told her students they needed to be advocates for the Black community. She also told them to carry themselves like they were supposed to be where they were.

Ethel died in 1991. The Washington Post published a piece about her on their editorial page. They wrote, "Had Ethel not been Black, she certainly would have been one of the most recognized journalists in American society."

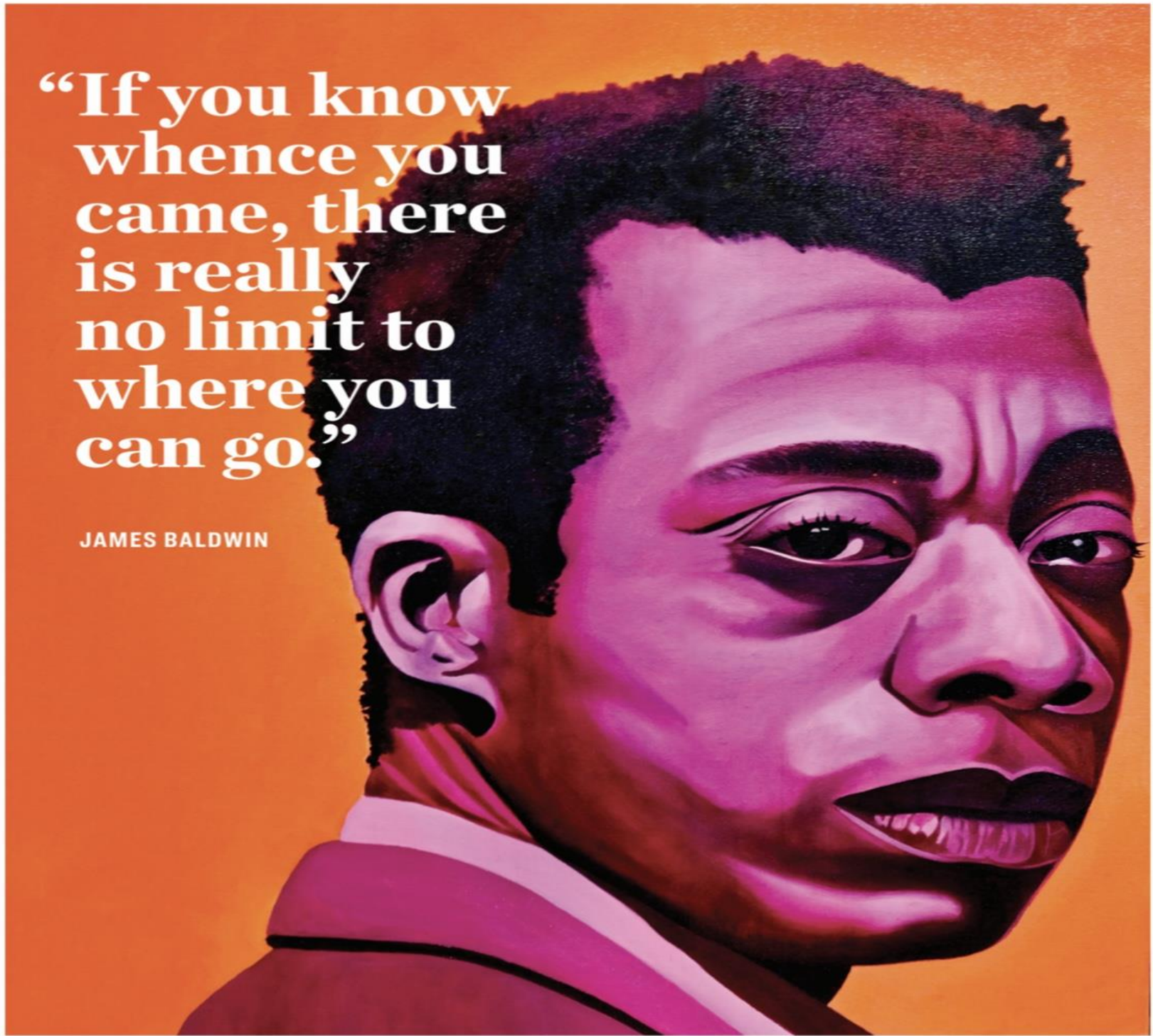


Kathy Trusty is an author, historian, Black history educator, and speaker for Delaware Humanities on African Americans and the Civil War.

Photo Credit: <https://library.garrett.edu/collections/special-collections/womens-history-digital-exhibit/ethel-payne-1911-1991>

“If you know whence you came, there is really no limit to where you can go.”

JAMES BALDWIN



James Baldwin (1924-1987) was a celebrated and prolific literary figure, activist, public intellectual and openly gay Black man whose work focused on the lethal and illogical state of race relations in the United States. For years Baldwin lived in Europe but returned to the U.S. to engage prominently in the civil rights movement.

ILLUSTRATION BY INGRID Y. MATHURIN

LEARNING FOR JUSTICE

James Baldwin Poster reprinted from Learning for Justice Fall 2022 edition, page 66. www.learningforjustice.org

Learning for Justice and participating artists encourage educators to clip the One World page to hang on a classroom wall. It is created with just that purpose in mind. Enjoy!



Marylee, entrepreneur. She was selling products from her ceramic school.

A Tribute to an Influencer

(cover story)

#ProudToBeSaunders

<https://www.letthetruthbetold.net/>



Marylee and Martha E. Smith (Nana, Marylee's mother) and family



Marylee with Bobby Seale