

FMU PRESENTS THE INAUGURAL

HERITAGE BOOK & ARTS FESTIVAL



FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, MARCH 14 & 15

Florida Memorial University
15800 NW 42nd Ave., Miami Gardens, FL 33054

WELCOME MESSAGE

PROVOST HILL



Dear Guests, Authors, Artists, Faculty, Students, and Community Partners,

Welcome to Florida Memorial University's Inaugural Heritage Book & Arts Festival! We are thrilled to host this inspiring celebration of literacy, creativity, and community engagement, bringing together readers, writers, artists, and educators to share their stories and talents.

At FMU, we believe literacy is the foundation of empowerment. Reading opens doors to knowledge, opportunity, and imagination, shaping lives and futures. This festival reflects our commitment to fostering lifelong learning and artistic expression, ensuring that every individual—especially our youth—has access to enriching literary experiences.

This two-day event highlights the power of books and storytelling. Day One is dedicated to engaging 2nd and 3rd graders in an interactive literacy experience through live book readings, creative workshops, and storytelling sessions. By immersing young learners in a fun, hands-on environment, we hope to ignite a passion for reading that extends beyond the classroom.

Day Two transforms our campus into a vibrant community celebration, featuring authors across all genres, artistic performances, food trucks, live music, and interactive exhibits. This day is about connecting people through literature, culture, and the arts, fostering a love for creativity and storytelling in a welcoming and engaging atmosphere.

The success of this festival would not be possible without the dedication and hard work of our faculty, staff, students, and community partners. We are grateful to the authors, artists, and vendors who have joined us to share their talents, as well as the families, educators, and literacy advocates who support and encourage reading in our community. Your commitment to literacy and education is truly invaluable.

As you explore the festival, we invite you to immerse yourself in the world of books and the arts. Whether you are here to meet an author, attend a performance, participate in a workshop, or simply enjoy the atmosphere, we hope you leave feeling inspired and connected.

At FMU, we believe education extends beyond the classroom, and this festival is a testament to the power of storytelling, the joy of learning, and the strength of community. We look forward to making this an annual tradition that continues to inspire readers, writers, and creatives for years to come.

Thank you for being a part of this special occasion. Enjoy the festival!

Dr. Jacqueline B. Hill
Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
Florida Memorial University

FMU'S COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION & LITERACY: A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

Dear Guests, Educators, Authors, Artists, and Community Partners,

Welcome to Florida Memorial University's Inaugural Heritage Book & Arts Festival! As co-sponsors of this event, the School of Education & Social Sciences is proud to celebrate literacy, creativity, and the power of education in shaping individuals and communities. At FMU, our undergraduate and graduate education programs are committed to preparing teachers, literacy advocates, and lifelong learners who make a lasting impact in classrooms and beyond. We believe literacy is the foundation of empowerment, opening doors to knowledge, opportunity, and social progress. Through culturally responsive teaching, research, and community



partnerships, our students and graduates play a vital role in strengthening literacy and education across generations.

This festival reflects our commitment to learning as a lifelong journey. On Day One, we welcome 2nd and 3rd graders to our campus for a hands-on literacy experience, filled with interactive storytelling, book-making, and creative workshops designed to ignite a passion for reading. By making books fun and accessible, we hope to inspire young minds and build confidence in their literacy skills.

On Day Two, we expand this celebration to the broader community, bringing together authors, educators, artists, and literacy advocates to showcase the power of storytelling and cultural expression. Through live performances, book signings, artistic exhibits, and community engagement, we reinforce the idea that education does not stop in the classroom—it is a lifelong pursuit.

As educators, we know that literacy is more than reading—it is the key to critical thinking, creativity, and opportunity. Through this festival, we highlight the importance of ensuring all learners have access to enriching educational experiences, empowering them to grow, explore, and lead.

I extend my gratitude to our faculty, staff, students, and community partners who have worked tirelessly to make this event possible. I also thank the authors, artists, and vendors who are sharing their talents, as well as the parents, teachers, and literacy advocates who support and inspire young readers every day.

As you enjoy the festival, I encourage you to celebrate the power of literacy and lifelong learning. Whether you are here to meet an author, participate in a workshop, or simply enjoy the creative energy around you, I hope you leave feeling inspired and connected to the world of books and education.

Thank you for attending and supporting lifelong learning, literacy and the arts. Enjoy the festival!

Frederick L. Hunter, Jr., Ph.D., MSW, MA
Dean, School of Education & Social Sciences
Florida Memorial University



ABOUT FMU

A PROUD HISTORY

Florida Memorial University is a private coeducational institution with the distinction of being one of the oldest academic centers in the state, and the only historically Black university in South Florida.

In 1879, members of the Bethlehem Baptist Association founded the school, then called Florida Baptist Institute, in Live Oak, Fla., to create “a college of instruction for our ministers and children.” Amid racial tensions, then President Rev. Matthew Gilbert and other staff members fled Live Oak for Jacksonville, Fla., where he founded the Florida Baptist Academy in the basement of Bethel Baptist Church, with Sarah Ann Blocker as the main instructor.

In 1896, Nathan White Collier was appointed president of the Academy, a post he held for 45 years. J. Rosamond Johnson was recruited to teach music at the school, where he composed music for the poem “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing,” creating the song now known as the “Negro National Anthem.”

Due to a growing student body, in September 1918, the school began its third incarnation at its new home in St. Augustine, Fla., as the Florida Normal and Industrial Institute. The students were encouraged to be industrious and self-sufficient, receiving hands-on training in the practical fields that would allow them to support themselves and their families. In 1942, the school merged with the still-operating Florida Institute at Live Oak and became Florida Normal Industrial and Memorial College. Florida native and writer of the Harlem Renaissance, Zora Neale Hurston, served as an instructor for the school during this time.

The advent of the civil rights movement brought change to St. Augustine. Florida Memorial students protested segregation by participating in sit-ins, wade-ins, and swim-ins, orchestrated in part by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In light of the turbulent times, Dr. Royal W. Puryear oversaw the relocation of the school to a 48-acre former air strip near the South Florida City of Opa-locka in Miami-Dade County. In November 1968, the new campus opened as Florida Memorial College. In December 2004, the institution’s charter was amended, and the name Florida Memorial University was adopted.



ABOUT FMU

A BRIGHT FUTURE

The Florida Memorial University of today is ascending to excellence and stands in a position of great promise. Now a world-class institution, FMU offers undergraduate and graduate programs in high demand fields that prepare students for successful careers in the global marketplace. In fact, FMU graduates enjoy the sixth highest starting salaries in the state.

FMU is a community of scholars committed to the pursuit of knowledge, truth, and the free exchange of ideas. Students flourish with support, encouragement, and mentorship. Faculty reinforce the importance of life-long learning, inspiring students to fully participate and contribute to society. FMU students understand what it takes to succeed.

A beautifully renovated, technologically advanced, welcoming campus is the hub of vibrant student life. Whether you reside on or off campus, you will have access to activities for every interest, including athletics, Greek life, academic organizations, the arts, and even a nationally recognized marching band. A small, family-like campus community seamlessly provides the resources and opportunities commonly found at larger institutions.

Community engagement is a crucial part of the FMU experience. The university has become a major presence in the local – and global – community, having formed strong partnerships with renowned corporations and organizations. These relationships open doors, foster connections, and provide real-world experiences that set FMU students apart from the crowd.

FMU is a culturally diverse institution, transforming lives and helping to create a future for people from many races, ethnicities, countries, religions, and socio-economic backgrounds. The FMU legacy is firmly rooted in steadfast dedication and commitment to pursue its mission to instill in our students the values of leadership, character, and service to enhance their lives and the lives of others. Strong moral character, mutual respect, freedom of worship, and a commitment to serve are the hallmarks of what it means to be a Florida Memorial Lion.

FLORIDA MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY'S HERITAGE BOOK & ARTS FESTIVAL

VISION OF HBAF

The Heritage Book & Arts (HBAF) Festival is designed to be a transformative event that fosters a love for reading, encourages creative expression, and strengthens community engagement through literature and the arts. Hosted by Florida Memorial University, this festival provides a platform for students, educators, authors, artists, and the broader community to come together in celebration of literacy, culture, and storytelling.

Goals:

- Promote Literacy and Reading Accessibility
- Cultivate a Creative and Cultural Learning Environment
- Strengthen Community Partnerships and Engagement

Festival Structure

- Day 1 (March 14, 2025): Children's Literacy Day (Engaging 2nd and 3rd graders in hands-on reading activities and storytelling sessions)
- Day 2 (March 15, 2025): Community Festival (Featuring authors, vendors, artistic performances, and interactive exhibits open to the public)

Impact and Legacy

The Heritage Book & Arts Festival is a transformative event celebrating literacy, creativity, and culture. Day One engages 2nd and 3rd graders through interactive storytelling, live readings, and creative workshops, making reading immersive and exciting while fostering a love for books. Day Two expands the impact by uniting authors, artists, and the community in a vibrant celebration of literature and the arts through performances, book showcases, and cultural exhibits. By bridging education, creativity, and community engagement, the festival inspires lifelong learning, strengthens literacy, and empowers future generations of readers and storytellers.



SUPPORT FMU

SUPPORT THE POWER OF READING AND FUTURE EDUCATORS!

At Florida Memorial University, we believe literacy opens doors to limitless opportunities. Our FMU Reading Program is dedicated to fostering a love of reading and nurturing literacy skills among young learners in our community, while also providing essential training for future teachers in the School of Education.

Your generous donation will directly support:

- Books and educational resources for local children
- Training and development of future teachers
- Reading enrichment activities and community literacy workshops

Every contribution helps empower young readers, prepare dedicated educators, and build a stronger community through literacy and learning.

Make a difference today!

Scan the QR code or visit: <https://www.fmu.edu/about-fmu/administration/university-advancement/alumni-affairs/reading-program/>

Your support transforms lives—one book, one child, and one future educator at a time.

Thank you for investing in the future!



CHILDREN'S LITERACY DAY ONE

MARCH 14, 2025



Time	Event	Host	Location
9:00 AM – 9:30 AM	Introductions Ice Breaker Costume Entrance Parade	Dr. Brittany Lee-Wright	Lou Rawls
Break: 5 Min			
9:40 AM – 10:25 AM	Book A Live 1. Readman - The Special Powers Part 2. Yes, I Believe	Dr. Edward Robinson Mr. Jefferson Noel	Lou Rawls
Break and Walk: 20 Min			
10:45 AM – 1:00 PM	Rotating Sessions		
SESSION 1: 10:45 AM – 11:30 AM	My Story, My Book: Create & Imagine!	Elementary Education and Reading, Faculty and Students	FMU Building
SESSION 2: 11:30 AM – 12:15 PM	Lunch		FMU Building
SESSION 3: 12:15 PM – 1:00 PM	Mark Your Spot: Create Your Own Bookmark!		FMU Building
Depart: 1:00 pm			

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DAY TWO

MARCH 15, 2025

HOST: DR. PAUL MASSEY



Time	Event	Description	Host	Location
10:00 AM – 10:10 AM	Welcome and Introductions	Opening remarks and event overview	TBD	Stage
Break: 5 Min - DJ Selections				
10:15 AM – 2 PM	Book Fair / Artisan Market	Local authors and vendors will showcase their works. Attendees will have the chance to explore, and purchase works directly from the vendors.	TBD	Lawn Green
11:00 AM – 11:15 AM	Cultural Performance	Poetry/Spoken Word	Mariah Delgado, FMU Student	Stage
11:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Author Meet & Greet/Book Signing	Panel Discussion on Ethan's Good Dad Act	Trustee Dr. Bernard Jennings	Center for Teaching and Learning
12:00 PM – 12:15 PM	Cultural Performance	Live music performance	William Hobbs aka Nitrose	Stage
1:00 PM – 1:15PM	Cultural Performance	Poetry/Spoken Word	Elaina the Poet, FMU Alum	Stage
1:50 PM – 2:00 PM	Closing	Closing remarks	TBD	Stage



DR. HC BERNARD WH JENNINGS



FEATURED

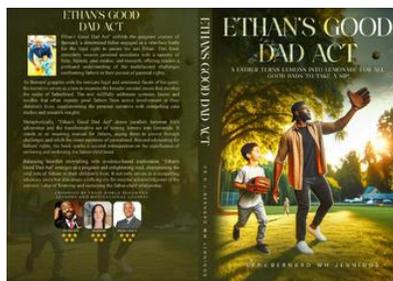
AUTHOR

Dr. hc Bernard Wh Jennings is a dedicated advocate, mediator, and community leader committed to social justice, fathers' rights, and economic empowerment. His advocacy journey began from personal experience, leading him to author The Good Dad Act (Bill #775), signed into Florida law on July 1, 2023, granting unwed fathers equal parental rights.

Dr. Jennings is a Florida Supreme Court Certified Mediator and Certified Loss Mitigation Specialist recognized by HUD. With extensive expertise in mediation, arbitration, and governmental affairs, he has successfully mediated foreclosure and employment disputes and contributed significantly to airport development and construction management in Miami-Dade County.

Politically active, Dr. Jennings has served as Executive Director of the Miami-Dade Democratic Party and currently advises political leaders through IKJ Governmental Affairs Consulting Services. Academically, he previously taught social sciences at Florida Memorial University.

His community leadership includes roles as Chairman of the Biscayne Gardens Chamber of Commerce and Steering Committee Chair for Biscayne Gardens Village incorporation. A recipient of numerous awards, Dr. Jennings holds degrees from Florida Memorial College, Florida A&M University, and a Doctor Honoris Causa in Entrepreneurship from the Los Angeles Institute of Divinity. His enduring mission is fostering justice, family values, and community development.



DR. EDWARD G. ROBINSON

Dr. Edward G. Robinson is a native Miamian with Bahamian roots, who has found the purpose for his existence in life.

Dr. Robinson was a school administrator for over 17 years in the Miami-Dade County Public School System and teacher for 15. He has touched the lives of thousands and has inspired them to defy the odds and reach their fullest potential. He is not only an educator, but a professional musician who enjoys sharing his talent with children and the community at large.



As an administrator, Dr. Robinson has provided leadership to teachers and students on all levels (elementary, middle, high school & college/university). He has been a college/university professor for over twenty years and has also been involved in the community in many different capacities. He is a published author and the co-creator of READMAN the Superhero for Literacy. His passion for children and addressing the concern of illiteracy among children in many inner-city communities lead him to develop this Superhero.

Dr. Robinson says "As educators, we understand the power of reading and that literary development is crucial to a child's success in school and life. It prepares children for future earning potential, increases standard of living, and helps instill a lifelong love of reading and learning.

As an Author, Dr. Robinson has published two books, the first is entitled From Poverty to Purpose followed by From Purpose to Fulfillment.

Dr. Robinson lives his life with these three C's, CHOICE -CHANCE & CHANGE.

You must make A Choice and take A Chance if you want to see A Change in your life and the life of others.

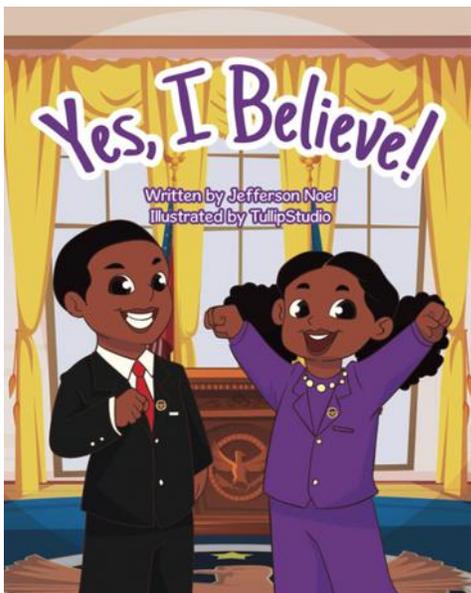
BOOK ALIVE

AUTHOR

MR. JEFFERSON NOEL



Jefferson Noel is a professor at Florida International University. He is a four-time published author, professional orator, award-winning educator, and TEDx speaker. Jefferson is the founder of Barbershop Speaks, an organization that engages in intelligent discussions inside barbershops and beauty salons. He hosts a television show on WSFL-TV that generates 340,000 viewers per episode. He has been featured on MSNBC, NBC News Now, NPR, and more. Additionally, he has received Miami's Top Black Educator Distinction of 2021, Legacy Miami Top Leader of Today & Tomorrow of 2022, the Man of Honor Award in 2023, Literary Trailblazer Award, the Black Man of Excellence by the Black Professional Network in 2024, and the 2025 Beacon Award from The Ellis Island Honors Society, established by President Ronald Regan.



CELINE ABUALHAIJA

ARTIST

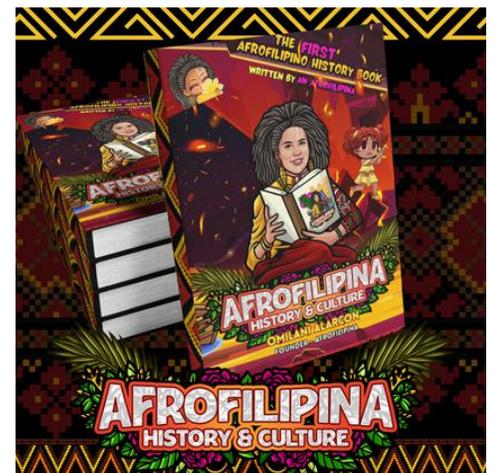
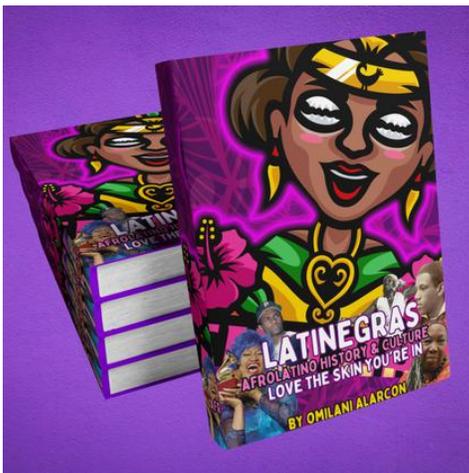
My name is Celine Abualhaija, an 18-year-old artist with a passion for creativity that ignited when I was just 11. What began as simple doodles on the margins of my homework blossomed into countless hours spent pouring my heart onto canvas. My artwork predominantly reflects my love for nature and animals. Through my creations, I aim to encapsulate the beauty, emotion, and vibrancy of the world that surrounds us. Each brushstroke conveys my feelings in that moment, and I aspire to evoke those same emotions in those who view my work. I want my paintings to forge a connection, allowing others to feel the wonder, tranquility, or exhilaration that inspired me to bring them to life. As I navigate my artistic path, I look forward to evolving, experimenting with new techniques, and inspiring others through my art.



OMILANI ALARCON

AUTHOR

Omilani is a graduate of Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. She is an AfroFilipina powerhouse blending art, scholarship, and advocacy who has definitely proven she can hold center stage. As the founder of the Latinegras and AfroFilipina brands, she continues to break boundaries as a performing artist, runway model, advocate, philanthropist, and scholar. As a Top 7 Grammy Showcase Finalist, Ms. Alarcon combines her love for community, music, and fashion into her comic book project AfroFilipina Shopaholic, which has the distinction of being the first AfroFilipina comic book superhero and protagonist. Omilani continues to leave her mark on the world through scholarly publications, albums, and unforgettable performances.

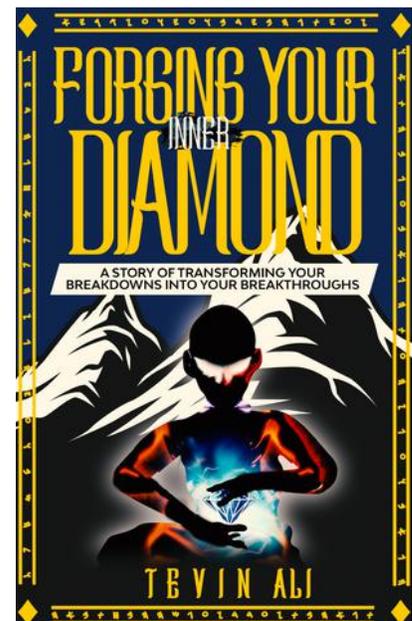
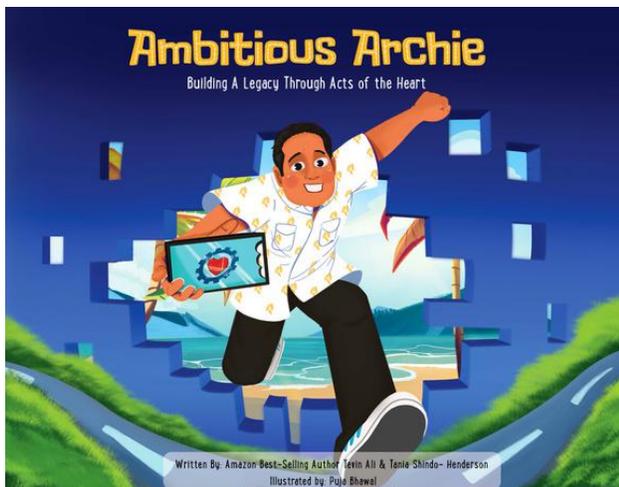


AUTHOR

TEVIN ALI

Tevin Ali is a national award-winning motivational speaker for college and high school students through his organization Talk With Tevin LLC. He speaks to colleges and schools across the United States on the topics of overcoming adversity, resiliency, leadership, and personal growth (unlocking one's personal mission). Moreover, Tevin is a 2X best-selling author of the book "Forging Your Inner Diamond" and the Children's Book "Ambitious Archie."

Moreover, Tevin has been the recipient of numerous awards and has been featured in National Media such as The New York Times, USA Today, and The US News & World Report Magazine for his leadership and commitment towards empowering others to persist and succeed in their endeavors. To date, as an empowering speaker, Tevin has helped forge the 'inner diamond' of thousands of students and professionals alike in their journeys. Tevin shares his journey and work on TalkwithTevin.com.



ED BROWN

AUTHOR

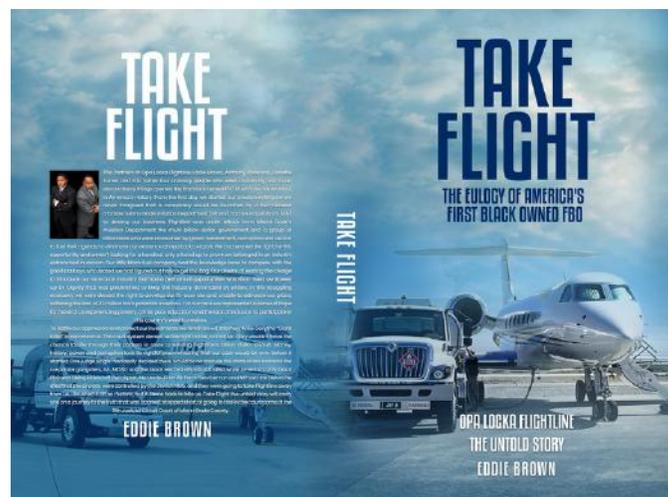
Ed Brown is currently the president/ceo of e. brown the firm providers of marketing, consulting, and business development services for corporate, governmental and private sectors entities. His platforms Offer matchless solutions to businesses seeking new ventures to enhance their financial passports while building economic growth and development in urban communities in south Florida. He is also an accomplished author and writer who has captured the attention of many public and private professionals and avid readers who have shown great support for his literary works, entitled Take flight and constant pressure.

Prior to these endeavors mr. brown has served in the capacity of owner for opa locka flightline the nation's first black owned fixed based operation

(fbo) in united states history. Other notable positions were city manager for the city of opa locka, director of franchise development for metro miami action plan trust, Ad junct professor for florida memorial university and ft. Lauderdale college.

As a testament to his impact in public and private sectors he has been featured in entrepreneur magazine, private air magazine. Intercontinental franchise review, miami today, miami herald and on the cover of success magazine.

Mr. brown is a graduate of st. Thomas university and holds a bachelors degree in business administration and a masters degree in public administration.



GEORGE GMOSS

George Moss (Aka - Gmoss™) is a writer, fashion designer, and host of creator events. He has created since the age of six years old. He graduated with honors and a Commercial Art Degree from I.F.A.C., also known as Miami International University of Art & Design.

George and his family own their company, Gmoss Designs, LLC, where they sell his Gmoss jazz history illustrations, character art, custom apparel, books, and more based on his story, THE CHRONICLES OF ANN & LO™.

Contact Gmoss: www.gmossdesigns.com



LATONYA GRAVES-BESASLEY

AUTHOR

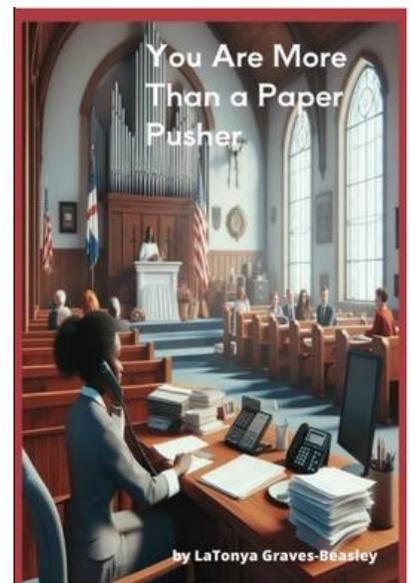
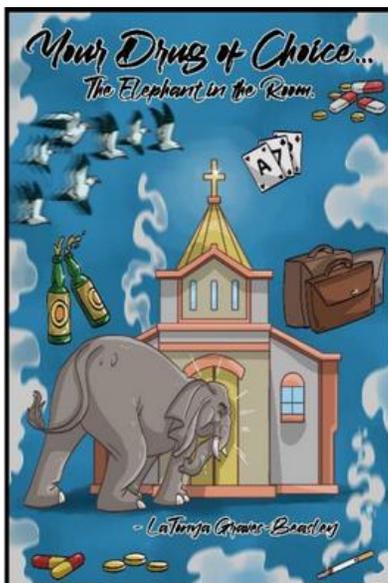
LaTonya GRAVES-Beasley –Award Winning Author,

Transformational & Empowerment Speaker

My 1st published book for Reading Is titled “Your Drug of Choice, the elephant in the room.” This book is a conversation starter for reflecting on some of the things not easily talked about. Next there is “You are more than a Paper Pusher” – this one is for behind the scene workers especially those working in ministry; and then we have “More Than a Paper Pusher” - this one is for leaders/pastors, all of which are available on Amazon with more to follow listed under Pen Name “Beasley Bee.”

I am the Founder of two Non-Profit Organizations “Youth Preparing 4 Success” and then “Passing on Hope, Inc” I am the Birth Mother of Three, known as My Gifts and they are My Inspiration. When I’m not out speaking at events, My pass time is spent with my mom and my grandbabies and then there are my added babies. I love to Serve, Read, Write and I Love to Sing. I am actively involved in ministry. My free time is spent posting encouragement videos on my YouTube Channel “Enjoying Talks with L & B”. For more information please visit my website www.Beasleybee.com and then my organization

website: www.youthpreparing4successinc.org

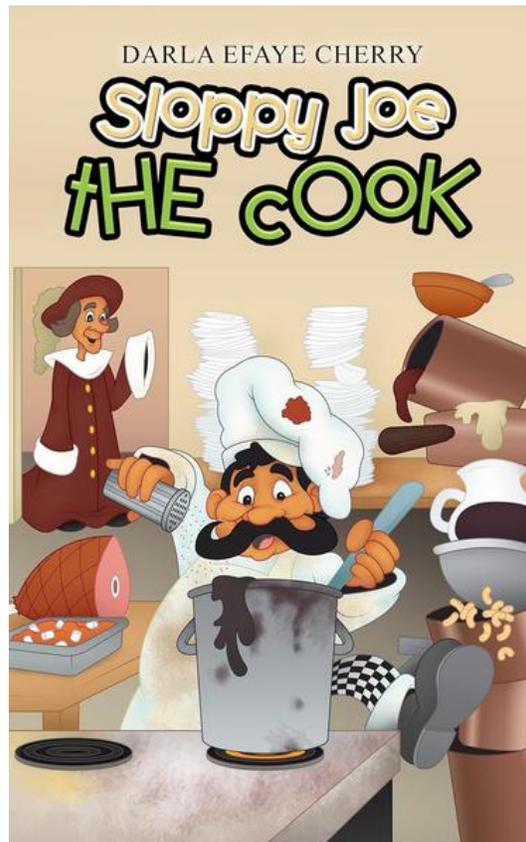


DARLA CHERRY



Darla has always had a zealous joy for food. As her love for cooking grew, she attended culinary school in Miami Fl. There, she studied different facets of the culinary field, and the techniques of creating dishes from a variety of countries.

Darla was motivated to write Sloppy Joe The Cook because of her passion for cooking, and the delight she experienced creating dishes at home with her adventurous children. Sloppy Joe The Cook shares Darla's passion for making exciting dishes in the kitchen.



DR. FREDERICK HUNTER

"Art is more than expression; it is a conversation between the soul and the world, a language of healing, transformation, and truth." — Dr. Hunter

ARTISTS

Dr. Frederick Hunter is a multidisciplinary artist whose work explores the intersection of storytelling, emotion, and social transformation. As a new artist, they have already made an impact, selling multiple paintings that reflect a deep connection to the human experience. Their artistic style embraces bold colors, layered textures, and evocative compositions that invite viewers into a space of introspection and dialogue.

A proud member of ArtsUnited, Dr. Hunter is committed to fostering inclusivity and representation within the creative community. Through their involvement with the organization, they seek to uplift diverse voices, advocate for artistic freedom, and contribute to the ongoing conversation about the role of art in shaping culture and society.

Dr. Hunter's work is heavily influenced by their academic background in social sciences and community advocacy. Their art serves as a bridge between personal reflection and collective consciousness, weaving together themes of identity, resilience, healing, and social justice. By integrating these elements, they create pieces that not only engage the senses but also challenge perspectives and inspire change.

Based in South Florida, Dr. Hunter believes that art is a powerful tool for transformation. Whether exploring the complexities of trauma, the beauty of self-discovery, or the strength found in community, their creations encourage dialogue and emotional connection. They are passionate about using art as a means of storytelling, healing, and empowerment, ensuring that each piece resonates with those who encounter it.

Through exhibitions, collaborations, and continued artistic growth, Dr. Hunter remains dedicated to pushing creative boundaries and using their work as a catalyst for meaningful conversations. As they continue to evolve as an artist, they are excited to share their journey with others and contribute to the vibrant landscape of contemporary art.

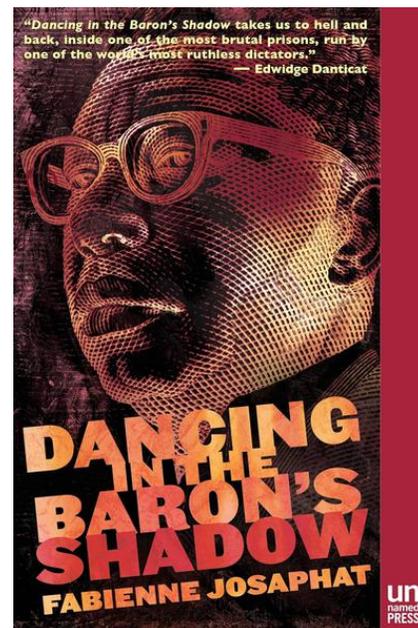
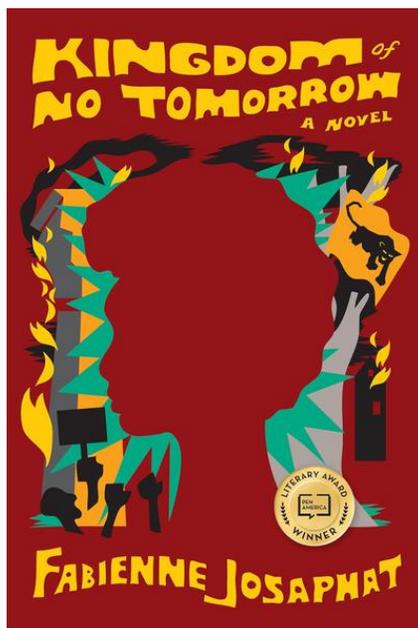
For more information on Dr. Hunter's latest work, upcoming exhibitions, and collaborations, visit their ArtsUnited profile and explore the transformative power of art.



FABIENNE JOSAPHAT



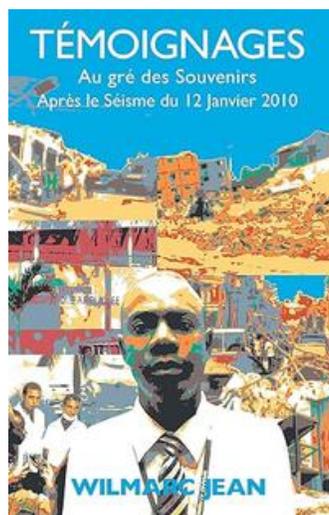
Fabienne Josaphat is the 2023 PEN Bellwether Prize for Socially Engaged Fiction, and the author of the novel *Kingdom of No Tomorrow* (Algonquin). Her first novel, *Dancing in the Baron's Shadow*, was published by Unnamed Press. Her work has been published in *The Bellevue Literary Review*, *Pleiades*, the *Master's Review*, the *Hong Kong Review*, *The Washington Post* and *Teen Vogue*. She is currently at work on a third novel.



WILMARC JEAN



Wilmarc Jean is a memorialist, teacher of foreign languages, translator and gospel preacher. He's the author of a memoir in which he describes his experience as a survivor of a natural disaster. The book entitled "Témoignage" is a captivating testimony of a young and talented author Wilmarc Jean. In Témoignages, originally written in French, Wilmarc took the time to share his close encounter with death during the magnitude seven earthquake that claimed more than 300,000 Haitian lives in January 2010. The book is written in a simple, easy to read style that drags the reader along in a nightmarish reality of Wilmarc's experience. Wilmarc is a passionate for education and literature. He's a radio host, speaker. The author is about to release the second volume of "Testimony II".



AUTHOR

ALESHIA C. JORDAN

Aleshia C. Jordan: A Life of Faith, Leadership, and Purpose

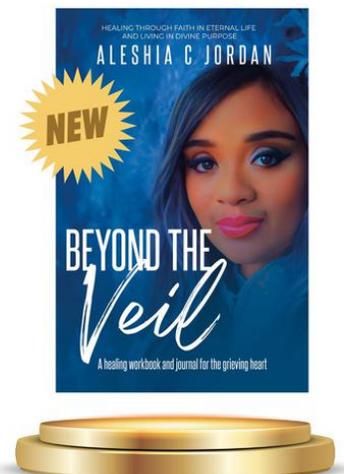
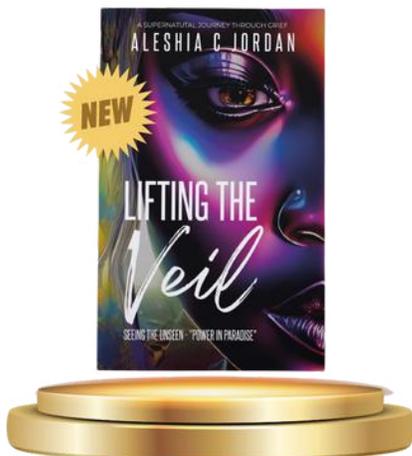
Aleshia C. Jordan is a devoted disciple of Christ, Performance & Kingdom Building Strategist, Leadership & Life Coach, Realtor, and Author committed to leading souls to Christ. As the founder of multiple nonprofits and a thriving consulting business, her work serves as a full-time ministry.

A widow and mother of three, Aleshia holds degrees in Finance, Management, and Psychology from Howard University, along with an honorary doctorate for contributions to theology, education, and community service. She is a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

In 2020, Aleshia lost her husband, Victor, to blood clots, inspiring her debut book, *Lifting the Veil* (2023), chronicling her faith and healing journey. To honor Victor's passion for underserved youth, she founded the Victor A.E. Jordan Foundation, focusing on mental health advocacy and literacy. The foundation launched Local Book Signing Expos, engaging 500+ readers across Florida and St. Louis.

In January 2025, she released *Beyond the Veil*, a healing workbook and journal. Through her books, speaking, and ministry, Aleshia empowers others to embrace faith, healing, and purpose.

Join the movement. Experience transformation. Step into kingdom living.



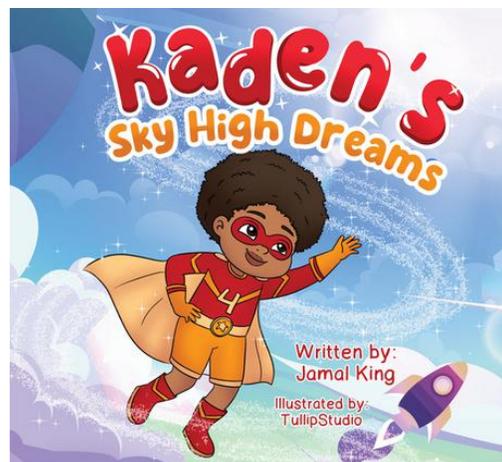
JAMAL KING

With a background as an educator and behavioral specialist, Jamal King is dedicated to supporting students' academic success and emotional growth. Jamal holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and is certified in teaching and school counseling. He completed his undergraduate studies at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) and earned his master's degree in Developmental Disabilities with a specialization in Applied Behavioral Analysis from Nova Southeastern University. Currently pursuing his Doctorate in Educational Leadership at Florida Memorial University, Jamal demonstrates a commitment to lifelong learning and leadership in education.



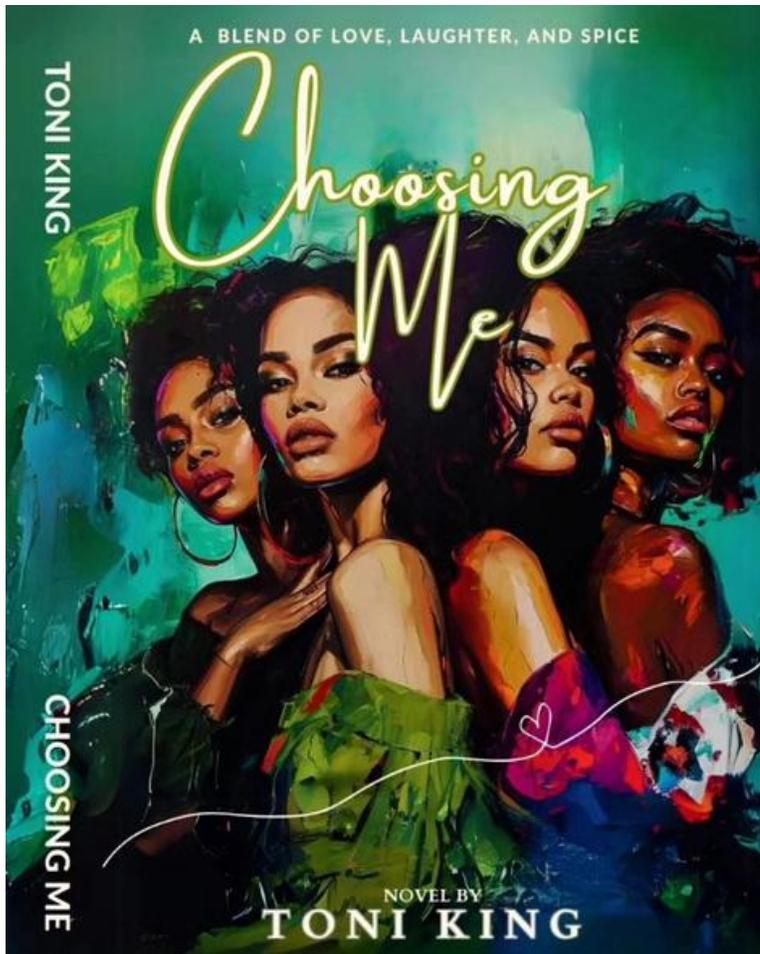
Professionally, Jamal serves as a Behavioral Specialist in Miami-Dade County Public Schools, where he develops school-wide discipline strategies and provides personalized counseling, focusing on diverse student needs. His career encompasses extensive experience across various educational levels and leadership roles, including positions in elementary and secondary education and counseling internships. These experiences enhance his capability to advocate effectively for students' social-emotional and academic development.

Jamal's passion lies in creating supportive environments that empower students academically and emotionally. His leadership, educational background, and professional experiences collectively highlight his dedication to fostering inclusive, growth-oriented educational settings.



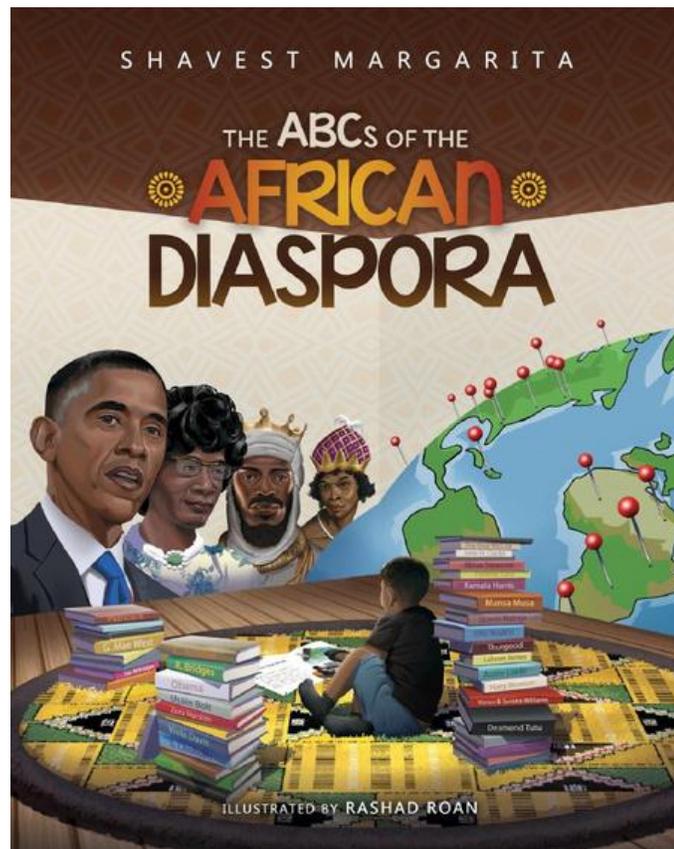
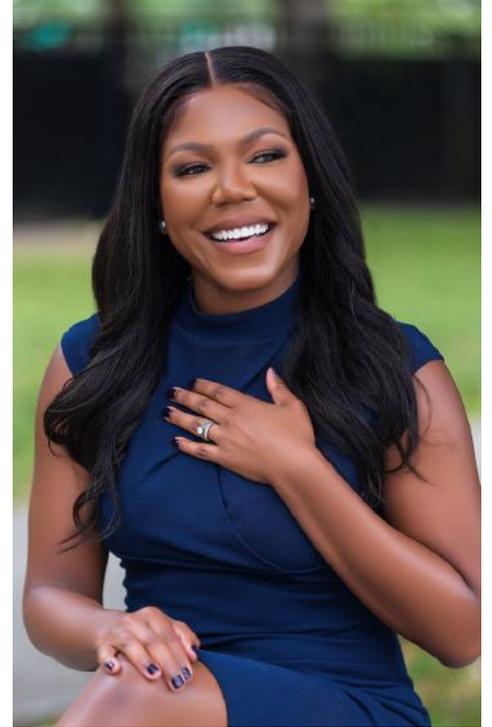
TONI KING

Meet Toni King. Born in Trinidad and raised in New York City. She is a Gemini that is full of life and has been writing for over 20 years, from poems to short stories but this is her first novel, with many more to come. From NYC, She moved to the sunny shores of Florida. Having different roles in the educational system, she has great experience with children. Toni is a proud mother and wife that radiates joy, laughter, and a profound dedication to enriching those around her with happiness and love.



SHAVEST MARGARITA

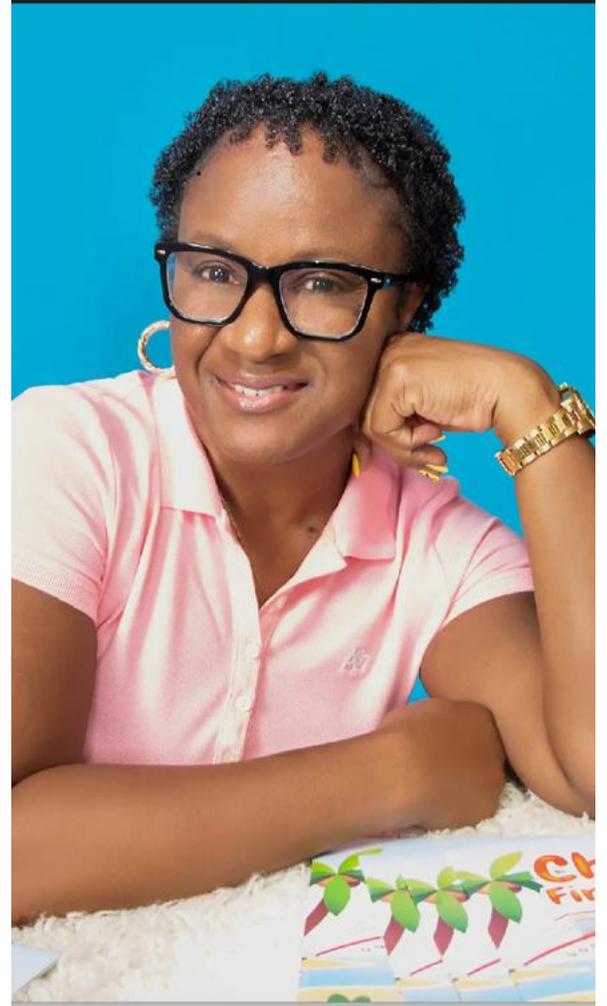
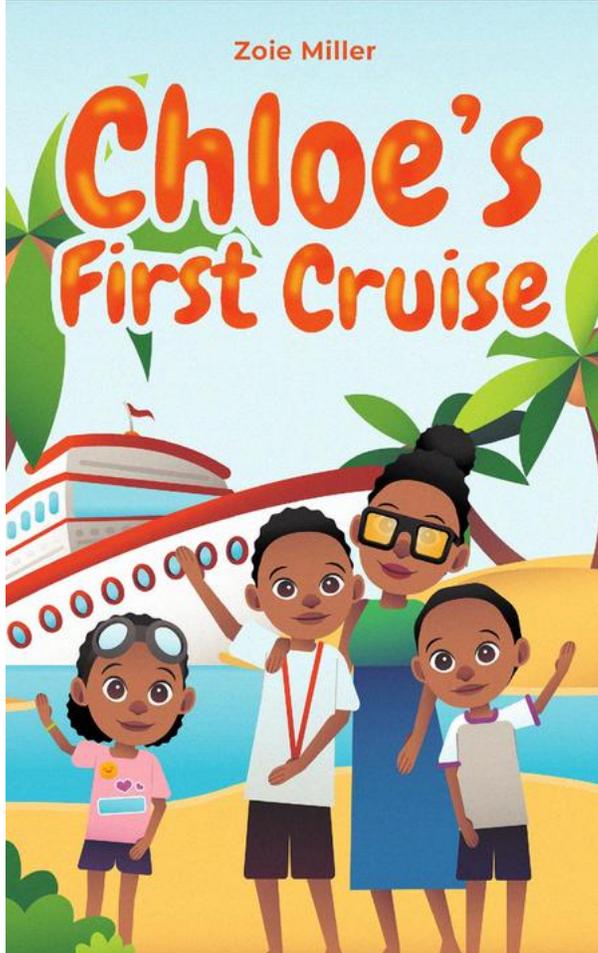
Shavest Margarita is a children's book author dedicated to celebrating and affirming the culture of the African Diaspora. She is a strong believer in empowering youth through knowledge of history and culture. Shavest began her literary journey by self-publishing *The ABCs of the African Diaspora*, introducing young readers to the rich history and heritage of the African Diaspora. Following its success, she became a published author, releasing five bilingual (Haitian Creole and English) children's books that further expanded access to culturally relevant stories. Committed to using storytelling as a tool for education and empowerment, Shavest has also partnered with Colgate to co-author a book that encourages good oral hygiene among young readers. Through her work, Shavest continues to inspire, educate, and empower children worldwide.



AUTHOR

ZOIE MILLER

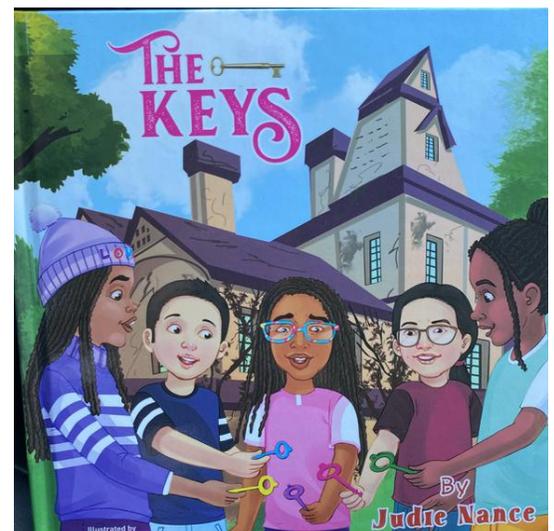
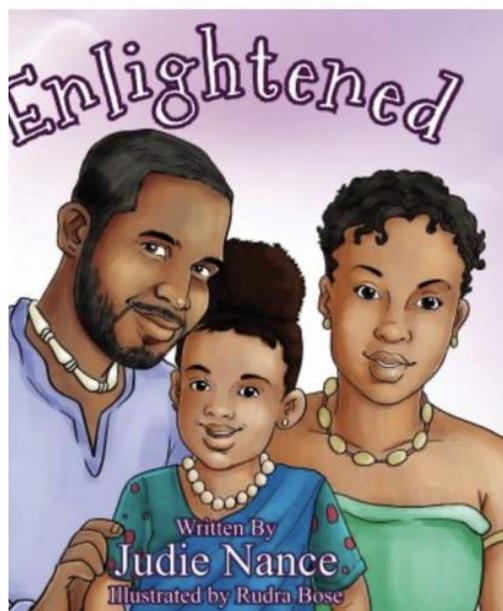
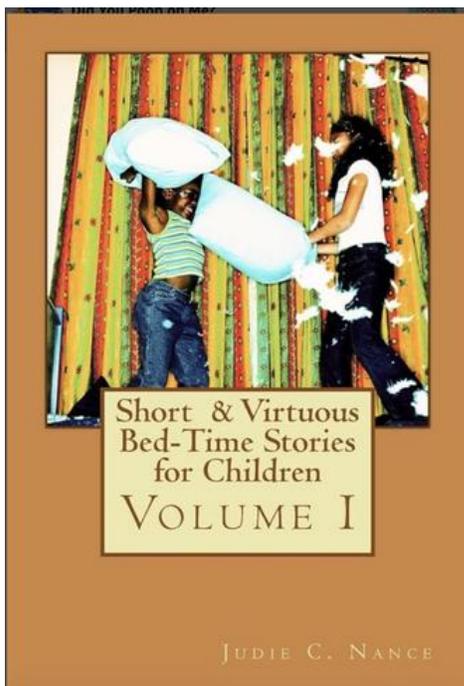
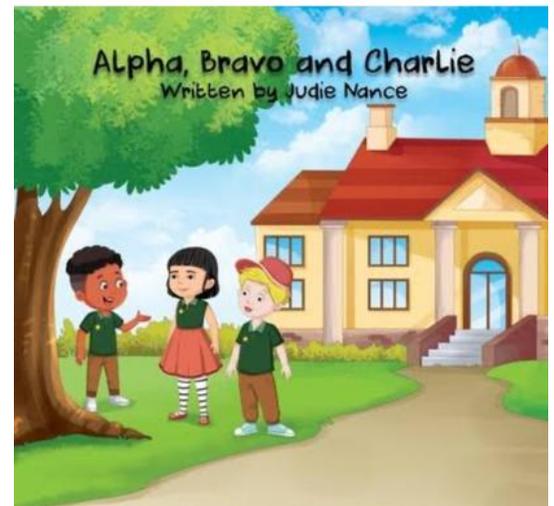
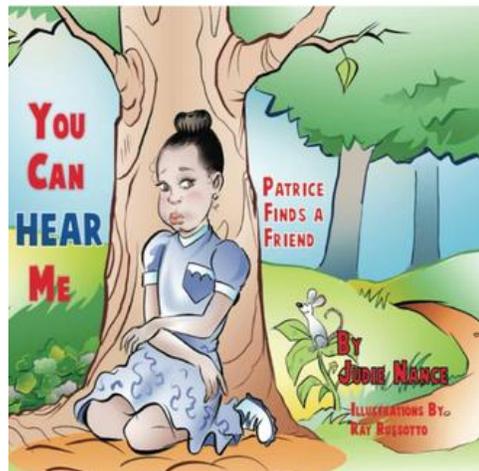
Zoie is a mother of three. She wanted to show her children that there's life after divorce, so she took them on their first cruise. Something different, that would transcend their thoughts to new possibilities. The children reflect often on this adventure, especially Chloe her daughter, who inspired this book. Zoie has always been an imaginative writer as a girl, her essays were often selected as examples to her classmates. She now embarks on storytelling in this, her first book.



JUDIE ESTELL NANCE

AUTHOR

Judie Estell Nance, an American author, born in Arkansas in a time when there was not much to be had, except an imagination. Telling stories was always a passion, making them up as she went along. Her first book titled, Short and Virtuous Bedtime Stories for Children can be found in the Broward County Libraries in Florida and the Mississippi County Library in Arkansas. She enjoys reading to children at local libraries and schools. Telling stories has always been a big part of her life.



SHEDIA NELSON

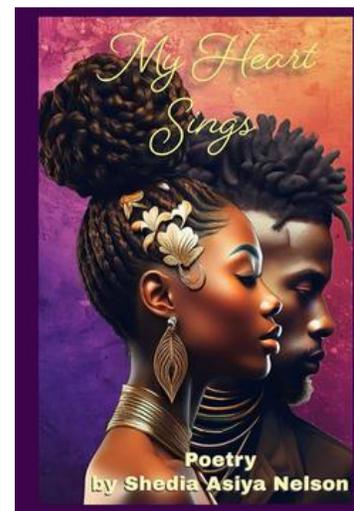
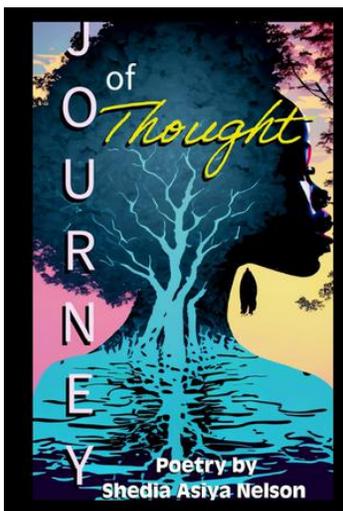
Shedia Asiya Nelson is an educator, artist, and author with a prolific career in literature and the performing arts. She has authored seven poetry collections, three part play series, children's picture books, and edited nine youth-led comic books. Her play series *She Kept Her Bra On: Chronicles of a Teenage Love Affair* raises awareness about teen dating violence and was adapted into film. Nelson holds a B.A. in Communication with a concentration in Theater from Hawai'i Pacific University. She leads workshops on teen dating violence and building healthy relationships, using her play series as a teaching tool. As the Artistic Director and Senior Operations Manager at URGENT, Inc., she empowers youth through creative opportunities. Her work has earned her accolades, including the Bronze Bra Award for Trainer of the Year, and features in *Voyage MIA*, CBS, and NBC 6. Nelson's literary journey began at 16, with her work featured in prestigious collections like *The International Library of Who's Who in Poetry*.



SHEDIA ASIYA NELSON



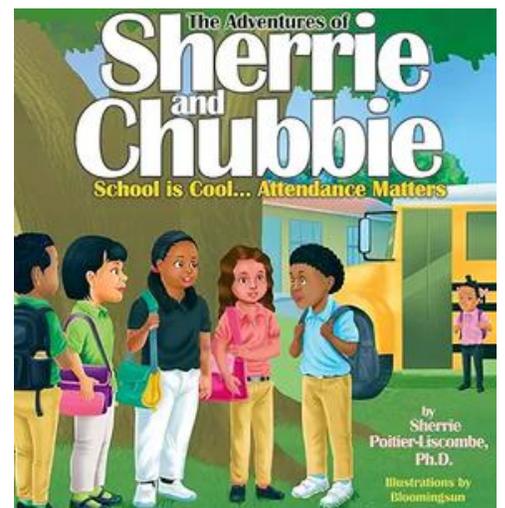
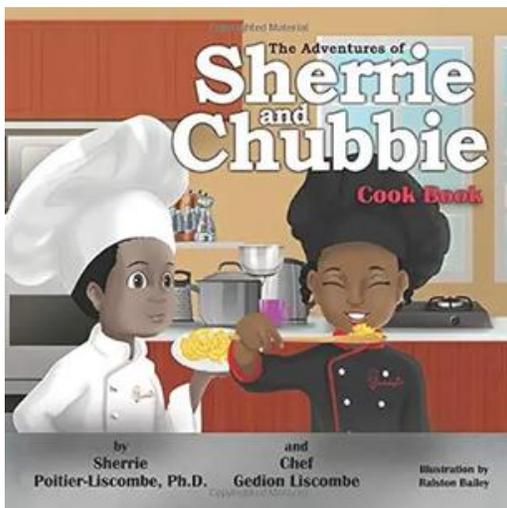
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SHERRIE POITIER-LISCOMBE

AUTHOR

Dr. Sherrie Poitier has inspired underserved youth to achieve Purpose-Driven living for 28 years through Broward Schools. Her Ph.D. in MFT has yielded an award-winning children's/teen author (70 published books). She produces published Wordsmiths from Youth by obtaining grants to publish children and youth authors free of charge in Miami-Dade/Broward County. This state-certified Counseling Director impacts youth using stories and relational connections to change trajectories. She has created a home education program, the Success Academy through Florida Virtual School, to encourage foster care students placed in a group home to attend school. Solution-focused thinking is paramount for Dr. Poitier, who was High School Counselor of the Year 2016-17 and Teacher of the Year 2016-18 (2 consecutive years). She has been a NESS/TIER mentor since 1999 and an FIU & FAU intern supervisor. Dr. Poitier is leaving a lasting legacy, changing lives through active mentoring.



DR. ALICIA D. RITCHEY



ARTIST

TyEisha Steele has been painting and drawing since childhood, with a lifelong passion for art that has evolved into a thriving creative business. In 2020, during the pandemic, she rediscovered her love for abstract and fluid art, initially creating pieces as a pastime. As her skills developed, she turned her passion into a business, selling her artwork to customers who appreciated the beauty of her unique creations.

In 2021, a visit to a paint-and-sip class changed everything. Witnessing a frustrated participant struggling with their painting inspired TyEisha to study art instruction techniques and learn how to successfully host engaging and stress-free art experiences. By 2022, Pour From Your HeART was officially launched, offering guided "Pour Parties" where participants could explore different pour painting methods in a relaxed, judgment-free environment.

The mission of Pour From Your HeART is to bring creativity and relaxation together, making art accessible to everyone—no experience needed! With unique paint-by-number kits and personalized mobile paint parties, TyEisha provides a fun, stress-free way for people to unwind, sip, and create masterpieces from the comfort of their homes or at lively events.

Her paint parties have since grown into fully mobile experiences, allowing clients to host their own customized paint events while learning new techniques in an encouraging and supportive atmosphere. TyEisha's goal is simple: to help others find joy in creating, focus on self-expression, and take pride in every piece they make—because art isn't about perfection; it's about passion.



TYEISHA STEELE



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HASSAN THOMAS



During the COVID lockdowns of 2020 and 2021, 26-year-old author, podcaster, and public speaker, Hassan Thomas, managed to transform an injury-riddled senior year of college football into a thriving multi-faceted financial education company called FYI FLI: For Your Information, Financial Literacy & Investing.

In just a few short years, Hassan has delivered 100+ educational workshops, won podcast of the year at the Southern Entertainment Awards, and recently released his second book, 'From College To Covid To Recession', which was awarded number one new release on Amazon for 'Teen and Economic Finances'.

NINA TIMA

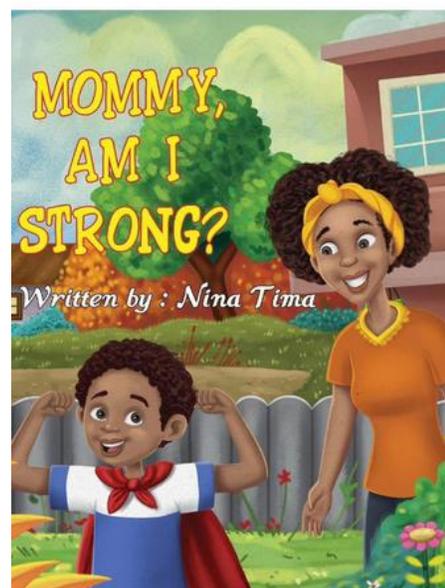
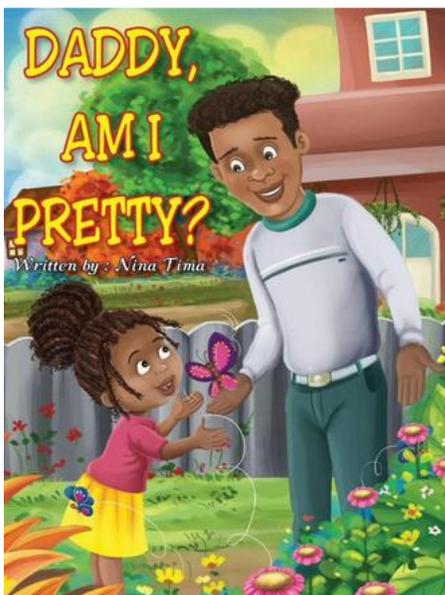
Nina Tima is a registered nurse by trade and a passionate author on a mission to help children discover their self-worth and God-given purpose.

Having faced and triumphed over bullying and self-esteem struggles in her own childhood, Nina understands the challenges today's youth encounter. This deeply personal journey fuels her commitment to uplifting the next generation.

Her books are more than just tales; they are empowering tools designed to inspire and instill a sense of value in children, reminding them that they are wonderfully created, even in a world that often challenges their self-esteem.

Through her writing, she aims to foster confidence and resilience, ensuring every child knows they are loved and capable of greatness.

Nina currently lives in Miami, FL with her dog Nova. She enjoys traveling and goes on medical mission trips yearly in Africa.



DAVICA WILLIAMS

Davica Williams, widely known as "DaviSpeaks," is a prominent public figure recognized for her authenticity and ability to connect with diverse audiences. Beginning her career as a model, she transitioned into media, currently hosting the TV show Late Night With Davi on The CW Network (South Florida). Beyond her entertainment career, Davica is passionately involved in advocacy, raising awareness about Systemic Scleroderma after losing her twin sister to the disease. A devoted advocate, she provides a voice for marginalized and underserved communities.

A proud third-generation alumna of Florida Memorial University, Davica holds a Bachelor's degree from FMU and actively serves her alma mater as the Executive Director of Advancement and Alumni Affairs. In this role, she enhances alumni engagement and spearheads philanthropic initiatives to support institutional advancement. Additionally, Davica excels in real estate, serving as an Executive Realtor with Elite Realty Partners, Inc.

Davica's commitment to community, education, and advocacy exemplifies her multifaceted impact and leadership.

Social Media & Contact:

- YouTube: [youtube.com/davispeaks](https://www.youtube.com/davispeaks)
- Instagram: [instagram.com/davispeaks](https://www.instagram.com/davispeaks)
- Facebook: [facebook.com/davispeaks](https://www.facebook.com/davispeaks)
- Booking: INFO@DAVISPEAKS.COM



DR. MICHAEL WOODWARD, JR.

AUTHOR

Dr. Michael Woodward Jr. is a native of Miami, Florida and a graduate of Florida A&M University, The University of Nevada Las Vegas, and Barry University. Recently, he has earned his PhD in Education as he amassed 31 self-publications. His feature children's novel, King Monte: Are You My P.E. Teacher? is a story of a talented young black child named Monte who struggles to find the right role models, conquer self-doubt, and change not just his own life, but the lives of the people he loves.

Michael's work is inspired by his personal experiences as an elementary school teacher working with low-income, black and brown students who struggled to find fiction they could see themselves in. As one of the few black male teachers, and witnessing the negative impact this had on his students, his passion to tell stories from the lenses of children of color was born.

King Monte: Are You My P.E. Teacher? is the first book from The Inspire(d) Collection with 29 others including King Monte: The Lost Tiger's Eye, There's Something About Mommy, Father Father: An Ode to the Fatherless and Forever A Scholar all available for sale at www.michaelwoodwardjr.com.

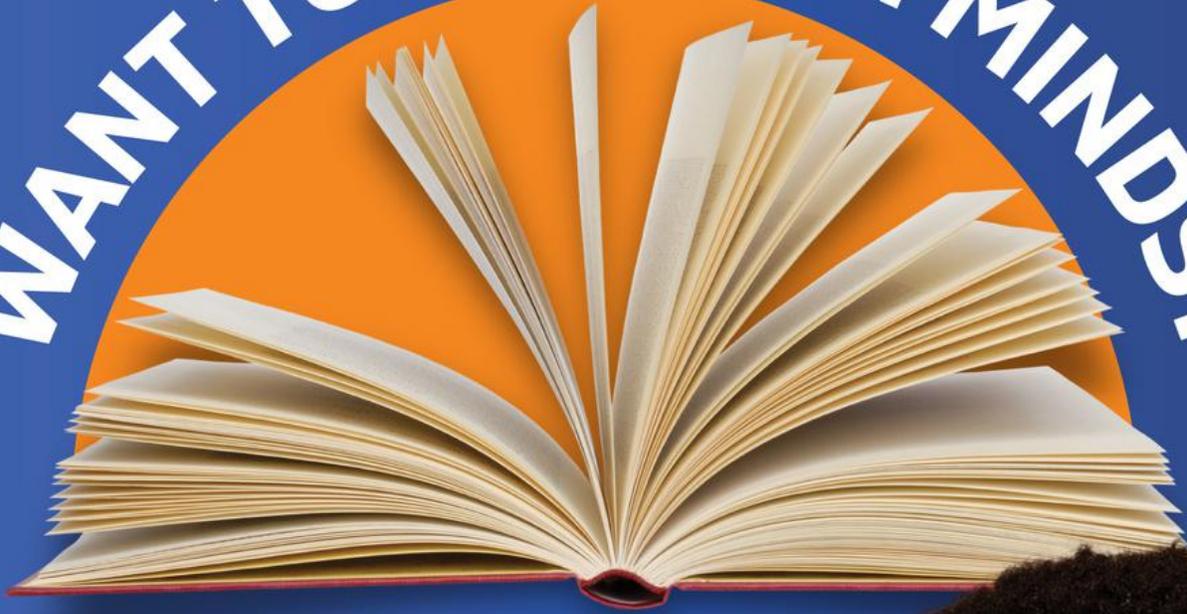


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A Special Thank You from the Planning Committee

On behalf of the Planning Committee, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who attended and participated in the Heritage Book & Arts Festival. Your presence, engagement, and support made this event a true celebration of literature, culture, and creativity.

We are especially grateful to our featured authors, artists, panelists, and performers who shared their talents and insights, enriching our community with knowledge and inspiration. A special thank you also goes to our sponsors, volunteers, and event planning team for their dedication in bringing this vision to life.

This festival was more than just an event—it was a powerful gathering of voices, stories, and artistic expressions that highlight the richness of our heritage. We look forward to seeing you again next year as we continue to honor and uplift literature and the arts.

With appreciation,

Planning Committee

**Provost Jacqueline Hill
Dean Frederick Hunter
Ms. TyEisha Steele
Ms. Yvonne Bendross
Mr. Davon Marrett
Ms. Davicia Williams
Ms. Cheryl Wilcher
Mr. Robert Richardson
Mr. Russell Motley
Ms. Ann Payne-Nimmons
Ms. Keishae Gillis
Ms. Kimberlie Correa**



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