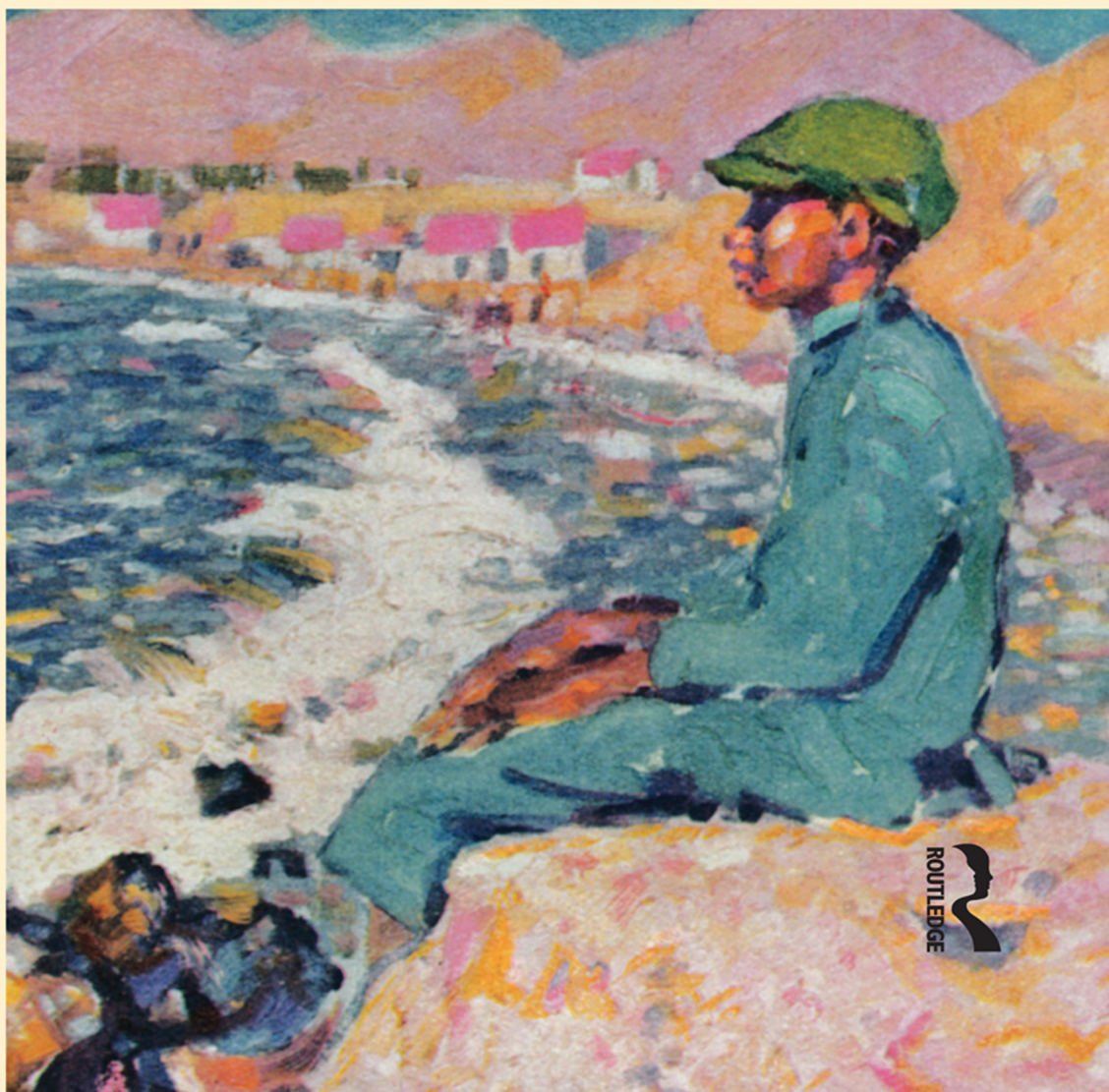


Black Authors and Illustrators of Books for Children and Young Adults

4th Edition

Barbara Thrash Murphy and Deborah Murphy



ROUTLEDGE

**Black Authors and
Illustrators of Books
for Children and
Young Adults**

4th Edition

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**Barbara Thrash Murphy
and
Deborah Murphy**

 **Routledge**
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Dedicated to my son, James Murphy.

Barbara Thrash Murphy

Dedicated to my brother, James Murphy.

Deborah Murphy

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Grateful appreciation is extended to the many publishers who forwarded our questionnaire to their authors and illustrators. Without this component, the dictionary would not have the personal aspect that was achieved by the individual responses.

In particular, to Nancy Hogan of Front Street Books (Boyd's Mills Press) we are deeply grateful for her willingness to provide us not only with extensive help in finding and locating contributors, but her enthusiasm was most encouraging.

The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and its branches in the Hill District, East Liberty, and Homewood, especially librarians Gwendolyn Hawk and Jennifer Pickle kept us informed of new titles. Many thanks to Janese Frasier of Marus Books in Oakland and San Francisco, California.

Most helpful in our research was the enormous collection of books by and about African Americans from the massive acquisition of reference works by the late Professor Emeritus Wendell Wray (University of Pittsburgh School of Library and Information Sciences) housed at the Chatham College Library in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

The late Toni Trent Parker provided an invaluable service to these editors and to African American authors, illustrators, parents, and children by researching, compiling, and publishing three noteworthy annotated reference volumes: *Black Books Galore! Guide to Great African American Children's Books*; *Black Books Galore!*

Guide to Great African American Children's Books about Boys and Black Books Galore! Guide to Great African American Children's Books about Girls.

We appreciate the efforts of Pat Thrash for proofreading several pages of the manuscript. Her expertise and meticulous reading of the text were most professional. Mary James Hicks gave us much encouragement during the process.

Finally, we are indebted to all of the authors and illustrators represented in this anthology who took the time and effort to complete and return the questionnaire and send a photograph.

Barbara Thrash Murphy
Deborah Murphy

Photograph Credits

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DISCLAIMER

Some publishing dates reflect the re-issue of a title and/or the release of paperback editions. In these cases, those titles are listed in the bibliographies using only the most recent date of publication.

Introduction to the Third Edition

BARBARA THRASH MURPHY

The parenting editor of *Essence* magazine, Joy Duckett Cain, gave me an opportunity to write a “Children’s Book Guide” for Black History Month. During the course of that pursuit, I discovered *Black Authors and Illustrators of Children’s Books* by the late Barbara Rollock, coordinator of children’s services at the New York Public Library. Mrs. Rollock envisioned an important guide and resource to aid in the understanding of the aspirations, thoughts, and viewpoints of authors and illustrators indigenous to Black culture. This was achieved in two editions. It is my hope to continue her efforts in this volume.

This third edition contains the 153 biographical sketches from the second edition with updated information for the majority, and 121 new authors and illustrators, expanding the listings to 274. More than 120 photographs have been added. Every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of the information by checking the data against a number of reputable reference sources. The expertise of the reference department at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, especially Sharon Howard, was extremely helpful.

The Wendell Wray Collection in the library at Chatham College in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, provided many facts and information necessary to complete some of the biographies.

More than 150 individuals were contacted personally either as a new entry or to update a biography from the second edition. In this regard, artist/illustrator Cheryl Hanna was most helpful by putting me in touch with various people in the publishing genre, which initiated a networking process that greatly facilitated locating many

elusive persons. Authors who are well known for their adult and scholarly works—such as Alice Walker, Langston Hughes, Augusta Baker, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Nikki Giovanni, and historian Benjamin Quarles among others—are included with only their children’s and young adult book titles listed.

The designation of the word “Black” is used throughout the book to identify the ethnicity of not only African Americans but also of those entrants who are from other countries throughout the world. Inclusive in the listings are authors and illustrators native to the Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands, Cameroon, Ethiopia, France, Grenada, Haiti, Indonesia, Jamaica, Nairobi, Nigeria, Panama, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Trinidad, Uganda, and the Upper Volta.

The individuals profiled in this work are identified by their full names (when available) with their given name in parentheses. For instance: illustrator Cal Massey’s name appears in his entry title as Massey, Cal(vin Levi). Individuals who use pseudonyms or pen names professionally are listed that way, with their given names in smaller print directly beneath.

Many new talents are also included, especially emerging young artists like thirteen-year-old illustrator Martin K. Riley, Jr., and author Anika Dawn Thomas, who wrote and illustrated her first published book at the age of thirteen. In quite a few instances, both talents are found in one person who conceives and creates those literary images to which Black children can easily identify.

The selection process for new entries involved mailing more than 1,287 questionnaires to 183 publishers of books of particular interest to Black children, asking that they forward them to these authors and illustrators and identify any additional names. Approximately 425 responses were received, but some were not African American authors and illustrators and therefore not included in this work.

The questionnaire requested birth year, place of birth, educational background, military service, occupations, inspirational influences, approach to writing and/or illustrating, achievements, awards, memberships, gallery and art exhibits, personal family information, a bibliography of published children’s and young adult book titles, and a photograph, which formed the basis of each entry.

All of the author and illustrator book titles are not necessarily included in their bibliographies. The discretion of the authors and

illustrators determined the appropriateness of the titles included. In most instances, the date of original publication is cited.

The bibliographies include titles that span the entire spectrum of literature for children and young adults to include picture books, humor, folk and fairy tales, animal stories, mysteries and adventure, science fiction and fantasy, historical fiction, poetry, drama, biography, and other nonfiction. These titles reflect the contributions of ancestral forefathers and foremothers to contemporary generations, linking past to present. With the proliferation of African American bookstores (a partial national registry can be found in Appendix 3), more books that symbolize the cultural heritage and the contemporary lifestyles that unite Black people can be selectively acquired.

Books by, about, and for African Americans have increased in number over the past decade. However, most literature for children continues to exclude the African American culture. It is important to continue to write and illustrate books of quality that express this heritage and have them available not only to Black readers, but also for the edification of all readers.

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Introduction to the Fourth Edition

BARBARA THRASH MURPHY

DEBORAH MURPHY

The fourth edition of *Black Authors and Illustrators of Books for Children and Young Adults* expands and updates the last index. This new edition aims to continue the biographical research for those who have an interest in African American writers and artists of books for children and young adults.

The book (to our knowledge) is the only readily available collection of current informational biographies and bibliographies featuring African Americans and a complete informational source of reference including personal photographs, e-mail and Web addresses for students, librarians, teachers, parents, children, the general public, educators, public libraries, academia in general, and Black heritage collections.

The dictionary chronicles data ranging from infant and toddler titles to books of interest to young adults. We have made an extensive search to include, whenever possible, all of the titles for each author or illustrator listing from the very earliest publication to the most current work to span the entire writing career. It includes not only well-known, award-winning writers and artists who have a historical perspective, but also those who are less prominent and initiating a writing or artistic career with only one or possibly two published works to date.

The word “Black” is used throughout the book to identify the ethnicity of not only African Americans, but also for those entrants who are from other countries throughout the world.

Books written by Black authors and illustrated by Black artists share a feeling that every person has—a pride in their own race. There should be a deeply founded footing in one’s own heritage

and culture, and one way this perspective can best be conveyed is through stories, art, and literary forms. One of the best and easily accessible avenues to provide this information to children and young adults is through books.

The profiles are of authors and illustrators who have written a wide variety of literary interests with subjects such as poetry, biographical topics of famous and well-known African Americans as well as those of important status but little or few prominent recognitions, teenagers' subjects, adolescent situations, adventures, continental African themes, animals, sports, civil rights, civil wars, family and life situations, fantasy, folktales and legends, friendships, historical fiction, heritage, music, mystery, poetry and rhymes, church and religion, holiday celebrations, self esteem and self identity, slavery, and more.

Dr. Elizabeth Fitzgerald Howard, professor emerita of West Virginia University and the author of ten children's books, states the following: "All of us who are concerned with children's books are convinced of the power of literature in promoting awareness, understanding and appreciation of other people and viewpoints. Surely the most compelling need in our society is for this. With the current demand for 'multicultural' books there are undoubtedly writers who are hopping on this bandwagon because it is a 'good thing,' just as there are surely editors who are anxious to flush out their multicultural lists however they can. But I also worry that as the economics of children's book publishing begins to force publishers to cut back, so-called multicultural books may be the first to be sliced. In these times of conflicting issues (more multicultural books needed vs. too many children's books being published) there is a danger that the present real zeal to find authors and illustrators from the parallel cultures will fade away."

To help establish a prospective database, the editors of *Black Authors and Illustrators of Books for Children and Young Adults* sometimes had to rely on the selection of books they deemed of particular interest to Black children by cover illustration, subject matter, or titles. Very few books contained a photograph of the author or illustrator on the back dust jacket flap and even then ethnicity was not always discernable.

For the most part, this anthology is a compilation of information submitted by the authors and illustrators themselves as well as information obtained from a variety of published sources.

In order to compile the anthology, ever-vigilant eyes and ears were constantly attuned to someone's passing remark about a new book title, browsing through the main branch of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's children's section, and periodically visiting the collections in the branches at the Homewood Carnegie Library, the East Liberty Branch, and the Hill District Branch to check out books of ethnic interest they had recently acquired. The task remains endless. Almost every reference led to several more and a voluminous amount of computer search hours following "leads" of relevant topics, consuming much time and effort, some profitable and some not.

We began the task to update prior entries from the third edition by sending questionnaires requesting additional current information of biographical data and listings of new books published.

In most cases, our first approach to locating and contacting new authors and illustrators was made through the publishing houses with a book title of particular interest to an African American child, or a cover illustration depicting an African American individual or scene. The cooperation of publishers making information available and their agreement to forward our questionnaire to the authors and illustrators publishing with their individual companies varied enormously.

Questionnaires were sent to prospective new authors and illustrators requesting information to include birth year, where they were born, education, military service, occupations, achievements, awards, memberships, recognitions, gallery and art exhibits, family, and where they are currently residing (city and state).

Those contacted were further asked to precede each autobiography with a "personal statement" regarding their thoughts on writing for children and young adults; what influenced them and how they think children can be motivated to read more. This addition to these autobiographies made the information much more personal and revealing.

A listing was requested of all their published works to have a complete record of the bibliographies regardless of whether or not some of the book(s) were currently out of print. Those with only one published title would also qualify for inclusion in the book.

Every effort was made to obtain information directly from the authors and illustrators themselves; however, biographical sources were also consulted. Further details came from published interviews,

obituaries, feature stories, book reviews, etc., and we were vigilantly attuned to the most minute mention of a book of interest.

The profiles of the illustrators of children's books reflect their contributions by providing the collaboration of two distinct artistic talents with vivid imagination to form a work to be enjoyed twice as much by the equal blending of words and images.

It is the ability of the illustrator to capture the essence of the text to present the reader with an extension of the written words.

The illustrators of these children's books skillfully combine the words and thoughts of the authors to form characters and scenes that enhance the enjoyment of the story.

Verifying content information necessitated the study and research of many books, databases, special collections, exhibits, pamphlets, bookmarks, newspapers, and magazine articles.

Improvements in technology and indexing have made both library book and periodical searching incredibly faster and easier, but ultimately opens up a voluminous amount of material that has to be read, sorted, accepted, or rejected.

This anthology comprises a grouping of authors and illustrators representing four distinct categories, although the dictionary is printed in alphabetical sequence. The volume contains (1) entries of legendary authors from a historical perspective, (2) contemporary authors and illustrators who have established a long listing of publications and have won awards, (3) emerging new talents with perhaps only one or two publications to date, and (4) the inclusion of international authors and illustrators.

This fourth edition of *Black Authors and Illustrators of Books for Children and Young Adults* is therefore an extensive collection of the Black artists and authors who are prominent in the genre of literature for children and young adults.

Foreword

CARLA D. HAYDEN

Executive Director, Enoch Pratt Free Library

Past President, American Library Association

The recent fiftieth anniversary of the historic Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education* ending officially imposed segregation in public education was the occasion for numerous commemorative events and reflections. Although the resolution of this landmark federal case opened the door for the end of segregation in all aspects of life, the reality of a promise unfulfilled echoed throughout the celebrations and activities. Indeed, some commentators noted that young people of today, particularly African Americans, still need to understand their own and other cultures in order to bring about the dreams of those who labored to bring the case to fruition and the subsequent civil rights movement that followed. There was also ample evidence presented that demonstrated that despite the many achievements made since the decision, African American youth were still significantly behind in the educational arena and had not closed the gap that had played such a large role in making the case.

The passing of civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks led to further re-examination of the progress of the struggle for equity and equality. Yet again, educators, legislators, activists, citizens, and many others pointed to the need to continue the push for fairness and parity while recognizing the gains that had been made in many areas. The need for more cultural and global understanding was also highlighted with world events, from natural disasters at home and abroad to troubling instances of racial and ethnic intolerance throughout the world.

The recent passing of Coretta Scott King brings the issue to the forefront in the realm of literature for young people. Her influence

and support for the award program named in her honor were extremely significant in promoting African American authors and illustrators and their works. Since its inception in 1969, the Coretta Scott King Awards have increased awareness and visibility while providing broader opportunities for numerous writers and creators of color. And in 2000, a trailblazing event occurred shortly after the publication of the last edition of *Black Authors and Illustrators of Books for Children and Young Adults*. The Coretta Scott King Award winner was, for the first time, also the winner of the Newbery Award, the most prestigious recognition in children's literature. *Bud, not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis was selected by both award committees. Deborah Taylor, chair of the King Committee that year and past president of YASLA, recalled, "these were two very different committees looking at some of the same things and some different things in what they were going to recognize the book for as the best for that year." It had been nearly twenty-five years since any African American had won the Newbery Award, although a few had been honor winners along with Caldecott Award honors for picture books. Curtis was the first African American male to win a Newbery and his accomplishment demonstrated the growth in the field.

This breakthrough caused some to question the need for continuing the King Award program and even the need for reference tools such as *Black Authors and Illustrators for Children and Young Adults*. However, despite the phenomenon of 2000, there is still a need for a testament to the talent, creativity, and diversity displayed in this edition. There are only approximately one hundred books by African Americans published annually out of thousands of titles. As a result, there is a need to distinguish not isolate African Americans in literature for youth, to bring attention to them, and not risk oblivion by inclusion without notation in other sources. In addition, there is a need to have as many ways as possible to recognize and encourage quality books and to identify authors and illustrators and their works.

This edition stands not only in continuing tribute to the pioneering efforts of Barbara Rollock but to the dedication and scholarship of Dr. Barbara Thrash Murphy and Deborah Murphy who have expanded and enhanced what is acknowledged as the only resource of its kind. Their work will build on the legacies of the past and such noted scholars as Dr. E. J. Josey, and Dr. Wendell Wray of the Uni-

versity of Pittsburgh, as well as bring this invaluable resource into the new century with more entries and additional personal reflections from the creators.

As the new century progresses with the fast paced progression of technology affecting almost every facet of human endeavor, including publishing, we still need to inspire and motivate youth through reading and seeing themselves reflected in literature and illustrations. The influence of media of all types and formats is real and immediate and can either help advance or hinder human understanding. *Black Authors and Illustrators of Books for Children and Young Adults* is a tool for everyone concerned about our future. We owe a debt of gratitude for the commitment and vigilance of Dr. Murphy and Deborah Murphy to ensure an important part of “the world of children’s books” will remain identifiable for all to see.

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Adisa, Opal Palmer

(1954-)



AUTHOR

E-mail: opalwrites@sbcglobal.net

Web site: www.opalwrites.com

Adisa was born in Kingston, Jamaica, the second of two girls. What she remembers fondly, and attributes to her development as a writer, are the stories she heard as a child. Adisa wrote poetry as a young girl, and had her first poem published when she was a thirteen-year-old student at Wolmer's High School for Girls in Jamaica. It was not until Adisa moved to New York City in 1970, where she attended Hunter College, that she seriously considered writing as a career and began to tell stories professionally. When she returned to Jamaica in 1976 with a bachelor's degree in communications from Hunter College, she worked at the Educational Broadcasting Corporation as an Education Officer/Director.

She has taught in numerous elementary and high schools, has anthologized more than thirty books of children's poetry, and is cofounder of Watoto Wa Kuumba, a children's theater group in Oakland, California. For her storytelling performances, she was named master folk artist in 1991-1992 by the California Arts Council. *Tamarind and Mango Women* won the 1992 PEN Oakland Josephine Miles Literary Award. In 1994 she taught playwriting and performance skills at Castlemont High School in Oakland, California, was poet-in-residence at Huckleberry House in San Francisco, California, and conducted poetry workshops at Brete Harte Middle School in Oakland, California.

The author is an internationally acclaimed lecturer and author of books for children and adults. In addition, Adisa's awards include

a Creative Artist Fellowship Award for storytelling, Cultural Funding Program, Oakland, California; a Creative Work Fund Grant—Senior Citizen Oral History Project, San Francisco, California, and a Master Folk Artist award for Storytelling from the California Arts Council.

She holds two master of arts degrees, in English and Drama, from San Francisco State University and a doctorate in Ethnic studies from the University of California, Berkeley. She is the chair of the Ethnic Studies/Cultural Diversity Program at California College of Arts and Crafts, where she is an associate professor.

Adisa lives in Oakland, California, and has three children.

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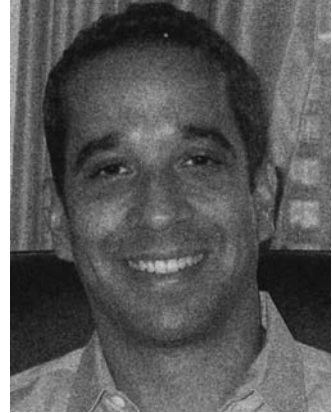
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Tamarind and Mango Women. Sister Vision, 1992.

Leaf-of-Life (Poetry). Juke Box Press, 2000.

Adoff, Jaime L.

(1967-)



AUTHOR

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Web site: www.jaimeadoff.com

“I write for the boy in the last row who never raises his hand, but has so much to say. I write for the girl in the front row who now has pages of poems and stories for me to read, before I’ve even taken my coat off. I write because it is the most freeing experience I know of. I can create my own world, my own universe, create my own rules, then break them if I want to.

“I would like to think that I could make a difference in a young person’s life, but that is making too much of what I do. I would settle for just being a small part in getting a young person to see themselves and to see others around them. To see how we are all the same and different at the same time, and to respect and honor those differences. Showing a teen that there can be hope, that there is always hope even in the darkest hour.

“I write because I love the fact that a book doesn’t care what color you are, or what religion you are or how much money your parents make.

“Books are for everyone and should be shared like a big slice of apple pie with two scoops of ice cream on top.

“So what do you say?

“Let’s dig in ...”

Adoff was born in New York City but grew up in Yellow Springs, Ohio. He received a Bachelor of Music degree from Central State University in Ohio, where he studied drums and percussion. Moving to New York City in 1990, he attended the Manhattan

School of Music and studied drums and voice. Adoff then went on to pursue a career in songwriting and fronted his own rock band for eight years. He released two CDs of his own material and performed extensively in New York City and throughout the Northeast.

He is the author of *The Song Shoots Out of My Mouth: A Celebration of Music* (2002), which was a Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Award Honor book (2003) an IRA Notable book (2003), a New York Public Library book for the teenager (2003), a VOYA poetry pick (2002), and a CCB Best Book for 2002.

The critically acclaimed *Names Will Never Hurt Me* (2004) was his first young-adult novel and was named a New York Public Library book for the teenager (2004).

His latest novel, *Jimi & Me*, was published in September of 2005.

Jaime lives in his hometown of Yellow Springs, Ohio. He is the son of the late Newbery Award-winning author Virginia Hamilton and renowned poet Arnold Adoff.

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Agard, John

(1930–)



AUTHOR

Agard—an actor, journalist, short-story writer, and poet—was born in Guyana, South America. He and his wife contributed to the art scene of Guyana, and his poetry has appeared in *Expression*, edited by Janice Lowe; *Plexus*, edited by R.C. McAndrew; and the *Sunday Chronicle*. Many of his short stories have been broadcast.

Besides works for adults he has published five children's books.

Agard lives in England.

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No Hickory No Dickory No Dock: Caribbean Nursery Rhymes. With Grace Nichols. Illustrated by Cynthia Jabar. Candlewick, 1994.

Andrews, Benny

(1930–)



ILLUSTRATOR

“I’m interested in illustrating books because it enables me to reach a much broader audience than my paintings do. As I travel through the country for my painting and drawing exhibitions, I meet people who first became aware of my work through books I’d illustrated.”

Andrews approaches his works for books the same way he approaches doing fine art. Each work must stand on its own. Often people who would like to own his paintings cannot afford them but they can afford the books.

Each book he illustrates is exhibited in fine art galleries, therefore, the illustrations must stand up individually and not be dependent on the essay to make it meaningful.

Andrews has exhibited his art work at many galleries and museums since his first showing in 1962 at the Forum Gallery in New York. His most recent exhibits have been at the Breanu University Gallery in 2002 in Gainesville, Georgia; York College Gallery in New York; ACA Gallery in New York, and the Southside Gallery in Oxford, Mississippi. Several museums, art centers, and institutes hold permanent collections of Andrews’ works. Among them are The Zora Neale Hurston Museum at Eatonville, Florida, The Wichita Art Museum in Wichita, Kansas, The Verich Museum in Wichita, Kansas, The Savannah College of Art & Design in Savannah, Georgia, The Philadelphia Academy of Art in Pennsylvania, The Ohio State University Art Gallery in Columbus, Ohio, and many more.

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Baptiste, Tracey

(1972-)



AUTHOR

“Life is about discovery, and we discover most of what we know about ourselves and relationships when we are children and young adults. Books can be a huge part of that discovery. It’s important that as authors of books for young people, we take responsibility to create literature that is inspiring and encouraging. As children read and see themselves in the pages of books, they will see the possibility for finding more positive things in themselves and their lives. I hope that I can always create stories that move readers, the way that many stories I read as a child moved me.”

Baptiste was born in Trinidad, the southernmost island in the Caribbean, and grew up on fresh fruit picked straight from the tree, tropical breezes, and the love and support of her parents and older brother. Since the age of twelve, Baptiste wanted to become a writer, but she started really taking her writing seriously after reading *Friends* by Rosa Guy. At the time, Baptiste was fifteen and had recently moved to Brooklyn, New York, with her family. Later, she attended New York University where she received a BA in English Literature and an MA in Elementary Education. She taught second grade in Jersey City, New Jersey, and Brooklyn, New York, while writing picture book manuscripts. After six years of teaching, Baptiste left to work for an educational publisher in New York City. She edits Reading and Language Arts textbooks for elementary school teachers and students. Baptiste joined the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators where she met other aspiring and established writers who encouraged her to continue writing. After trying unsuccessfully to market her writing for very young readers, Baptiste decided to try her hand at writing a novel for young adults. The result of this

effort was *Angel's Grace*, published by Simon & Schuster in January 2005.

Baptiste lives in Englewood, New Jersey, with her husband and daughter, where she is at work on her second novel.

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Barnwell, Ysaye M.



AUTHOR

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Barnwell is a native of New York, now living in Washington, D.C., where since 1979 she has performed with the internationally acclaimed a cappella quintet, *Sweet Honey in the Rock*. She is a vocalist with a range of over three octaves and appears on more than twenty-five recordings with Sweet Honey as well as other artists. In her first year with Sweet Honey, she provided leadership in making the group's concerts accessible to the Deaf and hard-of-hearing through Sign Language interpretation.

The daughter of a violinist, Barnwell began her fifteen-year study of the violin with her father at the age of two and one half. She holds both Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Speech Pathology (1967, 1968 SUNY, Geneseo), a Doctor of Philosophy in Cranio-facial Studies (1975, University of Pittsburgh), a Master of Science in Public Health (1981, Howard University, Washington, D.C.), and the (Honorary) Doctor of Humane Letters (1998, SUNY, Geneseo). She has been a professor at the College of Dentistry at Howard University. In addition to conducting community based projects in computer technology and in the arts, she has administered and implemented health programs at Children's Hospital National Medical Center and at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C.

After coming to Washington, D.C., Barnwell founded, and for three years directed, the All Souls Jubilee Singers where she began composing and arranging music for vocal ensembles. Barnwell com-

posed and arranged music on more than fourteen recordings on labels including Flying Fish, EarthBeat!/Warner, Music for Little People and Rykodisc/Palm Pictures, Sony Classical. She has worked as a commissioned composer on numerous and varied projects including Sesame Street, Dance Alloy of Pittsburgh, David Rousseve's Reality Dance Company, Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, Women's Philharmonic of San Francisco, Redwood Cultural Work, The New Spirituals Project, The Steel Festival of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, The Plymouth Music Series and numerous choirs—all outgrowths of her combined understanding of creative arts inextricably bound to society. For twenty years now, Barnwell has conducted *The Workshop: Building a Vocal Community*—Singing in the African American Tradition where throughout the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and Australia she has utilized African and African American history, values, cultural, and vocal traditions to work with singers and nonsingers alike.

Barnwell is an actress whose credits include voice-overs, documentary film narration, a principal role in an episode of the TV show *A Man Called Hawk*, and an appearance in the film *Beloved* directed by Jonathan Demme. Professional association memberships include NARAS (National Association of Recording Arts and Sciences), and SAG (Screen Actors Guild).

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Battle-Lavert, Gwendolyn

(1951-)



AUTHOR

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Battle-Lavert was born in Texas, the first of four children. When she was a young child, storytelling, church, and music were important parts of family life. Battle-Lavert credits this training for her love of books and the motivation to become a writer.

While in elementary school and throughout her college years, she listened to stories as well as wrote them. She graduated from East Texas State University with a Bachelor of Elementary Education degree in 1974 and earned her master's in education as a Reading Specialist in 1976. She taught elementary school for thirteen years, and for five years she was a reading/writing coordinator for the Texarkana Independent School District. Her interest in multicultural education has led her to conduct reading and writing workshops in schools throughout the country.

Battle-Lavert is an African American children's author, storyteller, and performer. She has also written for *Cricket*, *Ladybug*, and *Adoptive Families* magazines. In Texas she has provided numerous presentations during Martin Luther King, Jr. and Black History month.

She is a member of the International Reading Association, the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, the Texas State Reading Association, and the Association for Supervision and Development. She is working on a series for reluctant readers.

Works in Progress are *Tabias Leads the Way*, *Eddie Ray and Hi Rocking Chair*, *The Harmonica Man*, *Daisy's Christmas Wish*.

A wife and mother of a son and a daughter, Battle-Lavert is currently an assistant professor of Education at Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, Indiana.

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The Music in Derrick's Heart. Illustrated by Colin Bootman. Holiday House, 2000.

Papa's Mark. Illustrated by Colin Bootman. Holiday House, 2002.

Belton, Sandra Yvonne

(1939–)



AUTHOR

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“In the rows of library shelves I searched as a child, none of colorful, narrow volumes were written or designed to catch the eye and imagination of a young African-American girl. It was this void that sparked a strong desire to extend and enrich the reflections on those shelves—a desire further fueled and strengthened by an ever increasing knowledge of the many wonderful stories within a magnificent heritage yet to be told.”

Belton’s childhood was spent in the majestic hills of West Virginia. Her educational background includes a bachelor of arts degree from Howard University (Washington, D.C.), master of arts degree from George Washington University (Washington, D.C.), and a year of study at the Boston Conservatory of Music.

Belton’s career in education began in Washington, D.C., where she taught first and second grades and continued in Chicago, Illinois where she taught briefly in a community college before becoming a developer of educational technology materials, including audio, video, and interactive software. Her first book for children, *From Miss Ida’s Porch*, was published in 1993 and received the 1994 Friends of American Writers Young People’s Literature Award.

Belton continues to live in Chicago with her husband, James Hammond. Her books continue to receive critical acclaim, including the much-reviewed *Ernestine & Amanda* series of which was written: “With the series, Belton ... has succeeded in making sure

African-American children will see themselves in her lively, well-rounded characters...”

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Berrien, Todd

(1944-)



ILLUSTRATOR/ARTIST

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“It is clear to me that fine arts have a significant impact on the quality of life in our culture. My worldview, as it translates to canvas, is based on my varied life experiences and a strong value system that has enabled me to recognize that the strength and beauty of the human spirit can survive and blossom despite adversity. My paintings are visual expressions depicting the social and political concerns of the Black community as well as the human condition in general. I use my brush like a hammer to protest and comment on the conditions I see.”

Harlem painter, designer, and illustrator, Berrien has been a professional artist since 1970. His paintings, depicting a broad spectrum of human emotions, have been exhibited widely in museums, universities and art galleries around the country and he is represented in several collections. He has published numerous lithographs.

He studied art at several colleges and universities, including the Art Student’s League of New York, the School of Visual Arts, Parsons College of Art & Design, Indiana University, the University of North Carolina (BA), and the graduate school at the Savannah College of Art & Design. He also studied privately with established artists Daniel Greene and John Howard Sanden in their workshops.

His professional life has ranged from the jungles of Vietnam where he was a decorated combat pilot, to an airline pilot, to major advertising agencies as an award-winning creative director, to currently promoting health as the social marketing director at the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

Memberships: National Conference of Artists, the Distinguished Flying Cross Society, and Disabled Veterans of America.

Berrien lives in Los Angeles with his wife Dolores and is the father of three grown children, Dawn, Jenelle, and Todd David. He is the grandfather of an eighteen-month old, Jordan.

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Blackman, Malorie

(1962–)



AUTHOR

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“There was such a dearth of books featuring child protagonists of colour when I was growing up that, in my mid-twenties, I decided to try and do something about it. After two years and a vast number of rejection letters, I finally had my first book accepted for publication. I’ve been a full-time writer ever since. My aim has always been to make reading a more inclusive activity, an experience to be shared and enjoyed by all children where no child feels excluded or invisible. I write the books I missed as a child: thrillers, mysteries, whodunits, funny stories, horror stories, contemporary stories where the protagonists are Black. My greatest thrill is to receive letters from ex reluctant readers, telling me that one of my books has switched them on to reading. For me, there can be no greater compliment.”

Blackman worked in computing for ten years, as a systems programmer and database manager, before deciding to become a writer of children’s books.

Her first book, published in 1990, was a collection of short stories called *Not So Stupid!* Since then she has written over fifty books (many of the titles now re-issued in paperback editions) across all age ranges and won a number of awards including a BAFTA for Best Children’s Drama for *Pig-Heart Boy* in 2000. The book was also short-listed for the Carnegie Medal. She has also been awarded the Red House FCBG Children’s Book Award for *Naughts and Crosses* 2002 and the Smarties Silver Award for *Cloud Busting*. *Naughts and Crosses* was a BBC Big Read Top 100 title (number 61). Blackman was the only Black writer in the top 100.

She also is a script-writing graduate of the National Film and Television School.

Blackman is married and has one daughter. She lives in Kent, England.

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Bolden, Tonya

(1959-)



AUTHOR

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“I write because as a child I fell in love with reading—with every facet of a book, from content and illustrations to the feel of a book in my hands. I write because as a child I fell in love with the art of writing (mostly small stories as a child, mostly poetry as a teen). I write, I also believe, because when I was young TEACHER was usually my response when the question was ‘What do you want to be when you grow up?’”

Bolden was born in New York City and grew up in East Harlem and the Bronx, New York. She graduated magna cum laude from Princeton University in 1981 with a bachelor of arts degree in Slavic languages and literatures (majoring in Russian) and received a master of arts degree in the same discipline from Columbia University in 1985, along with a certificate of advanced studies of the Soviet Union. Before coming to writing, she worked in New York City’s garment center and later for the novelist, playwright, and screenwriter James Goldman.

Bolden’s early writing career included literary reviews and other articles for *Black Enterprise*, *Essence*, *Small Press*, the *New York Times Book Review*, and the 1989 and 1990 *Black Arts Annual*, among other periodicals. She served as book columnist for YSB (*Young Sisters and Brothers*) magazine from its inception in 1991 until it ceased publication several years later.

Bolden received a starred review in December 2003 from Kirkus Reviews for her book *Portraits of African-American Heroes*.

Also, from the March 1994 issue through the June 1995 issue, she served as editor of the *Quarterly Black Review of Books*.

Bolden's books for the young have received praise from the *Washington Post Book World*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *Booklist*, and *School Library Journal*, and won recognition from the American Library Association, Junior Library Guild, Black Expressions Book Club, and the New York Public Library.

In addition to her books for the young Bolden has written several books for adults. She lives in New York.

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- Maritcha: A Nineteenth-Century American Girl*. Abrams, 2005.

Bond, Higgins (Barbara)

(1951-)



ILLUSTRATOR

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A native of Little Rock, Arkansas, Bond is the second of five children. She attended Phillips University in Enid, Oklahoma, and transferred to Memphis College of Arts in Tennessee, where she earned a bachelor of fine arts degree in advertising design. She has worked as a freelance illustrator designing books, magazine posters, and similar projects for such clients as the publisher Houghton Mifflin, RCA, NBC Television, *Essence* magazine, *Black Enterprise* magazine, Avon Books, and numerous advertising firms. Over a twenty-year career, she has designed collectors' plates and commercial posters, too.

Bond has also gained national exposure through her designs of three commemorative stamps for the United States Postal Service's Black Heritage Series of W.E.B. Du Bois, educator and author; inventor Jan Matzeliger, and chemist Percy L. Julian. At the unveiling in 1992, in Atlanta, Georgia, she received a standing ovation, and she considers this accomplishment one of her most gratifying projects. In 1979, she was awarded the CEBA Award of Merit for her work in *Black Enterprise* magazine.

Her poster designs for Anheuser-Busch's Great Rulers of Africa Series, including pictures of a king of Mali (Mansa Kankan Mussi) and Queen Nefertiti of Egypt, were featured in the company's television commercial for *Roots: The Second Generation*. While Bond has painted other Black historical figures, she does not consider herself principally a Black artist. Rather, she sees herself simply as an

illustrator trying to work as much as possible, preferring to paint nature scenes.

Bond was illustrator of four stamps for the United States Postal Administration on Endangered Species issued in February, 2001.

She is guest lecturer at numerous colleges, universities, and schools and a member of the National Society of Illustrators—New York, New York.

Her husband died in 1996 and now she lives alone in Nashville, Tennessee.

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- I am Sacajawea, I am York.* By Claire Rudolf Murphy. Walker & Company, 2004.

Boné III, Thomas H.

(1970–)



ILLUSTRATOR

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“For every story told, each and every one of us will try to visualize that story in our own minds. We’ll try to picture each character, each setting and allow that story to take our imaginations to interesting places. I’ve always enjoyed creating cartoons, creating funny illustrations to stories, hoping to make others smile and to help take their imaginations to those interesting places. A book can be such a wonderful, inspirational and educational escape. If my illustrations can help to make a person smile, spark an imagination or inspire a child as I was inspired, then believe me, that’s a reward in itself.”

Born in Brooklyn, New York, and raised in Long Island, Boné knew before the age of five that he wanted to pursue a career as an animated cartoonist. Inspired by the cartooning greats of Disney, Warner Brothers, and Tex Avery cartoons, he pursued his career by receiving an education in cartoons from various art studies during his high school years and eventually furthering his studies at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York, School of Visual Arts and New York University in New York City.

Boné’s career began in 1994 as a cartoonist for a line of children’s watches. From there he went on to produce animation and cartoons for television, feature film, Web, book illustrations, print, greeting cards, and product and packaging designs. He has held titles within the industry such as illustrator, cartoonist, senior animator, director, producer, and educator. He also enjoys teaching a