

Journal of the Registry

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A Platform for Inclusive Justice and Social Change



Spring 2023
Special Edition

Our Time ~ Our Voices ~ Our Stories ~ Our Future
Our Journey ~ Our Strength ~ Our Path

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The African American Registry

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A Platform for Inclusive Justice and Social Change

A Word: As the **Journal of the Registry**, we are a **community ally and catalyst for social change** through the advocacy of inclusive justice. Our primary goal is to offer an open source for voices, visions, and thoughts that can get buried in the noise of racism at every level of society. The *Journal of the Registry* acknowledges the required perseverance of action on behalf of the Black community. Historically, we know that systemic change happens through consistent and pressing demands for policy change in America. We expect and will settle for nothing less regarding full citizenship that is equitable, and inclusive for Blacks in America. We stand today because of what has been done through the “feet on the ground” work of activists and allies. We remember and we carry the mantle of justice for today, and for the next generation. As agents of change, we draw upon our skills, wills, resources, voices, allies, and all that is given to us as a people to engage in ways that remove all barriers of oppression against our people.

We want the Journal of the Registry to be a space that challenges communities and propels those in positions of responsibility to make real, substantive changes necessary to bring about true equity for Blacks. Essential to the work of social change is found in the work of communities that seek a platform that is collaborative in removing the absence that often ignores systemic racism, and the impact it has on the thriving of Black communities.

The work of activists has a prominent platform here; as their day-to-day efforts are on the ground, and are often what bring about substantive rather than theoretical transformation. This journal welcomes readers and writers from many walks of life, from many cultures, and countries who are committed to transformation, accountability, and reparations. We understand the intersectionality of issues and groups and want to further alliances with a wide range of people who have experiences, and ideas that bring us all together.

The Journal of the Registry is an evolving resource for supporting efforts to guide youth, and generations to come. As well, we need our elders, as we must not forget how we arrived here in the struggle for equity. This space draws on yesterday’s and today’s events to give added meaning to tomorrow’s outcomes. The Journal of the Registry pulls from the root of historical knowledge that frames the mirrors and windows of race, class, and gender.

We aim to distribute nutritious intellectual, and emotional substance for all committed to engaging in the soul work of transformation. We are speaking of transformation that addresses inclusive justice and social change for Black Americans. As you come to your community’s junctures, we hope you find support in this space to rethink positions and stimulate actions that change the lived experiences of all of America.

Foreword

“We Must Continue to be Vigilant”

Julie Landsman and Dr. Yvonne RB-Banks, co-editors

As we ponder the message that looms before us all in our continuous facing of forces that seek to dismantle our personhood. Our struggle in the stance for our human rights as citizens of the world start close to home in our demand to accept nothing less than a new recording of truth. We are vigilant and remain vigilant in protecting our freedoms. Offered below are three guiding questions and a few answers to add to the work ahead, as you join us in the work of being vigilant.

1. What are you most concerned about for women in our country?

<p>Julie Landsman shared:</p> <p>My concern, as I turn 80 soon, comes from the perspective of a woman who did not have the right to determine what was best for her own body. Yet we made progress. We have achieved marked success in securing jobs that no women held for most of my growing up. We spoke out and came to demand non-discrimination, and equity along with our African-American, Latino, and Asian sisters. Now I see the most basic right, the right of control over our health, being eroded and denied in certain states and cities in America. My concern, in addition to my concern for civil rights, justice, and progress toward eliminating poverty, is that we will lose this right to our bodies that we, as women struggled for so long.</p>	<p>Yvonne RB-Banks shared:</p> <p>Permanent-unchallenged-Access to Our Rights!</p>
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2. Where do you find hope for us, as women, during these difficult times?

<p>Hope is all around us.</p> <p>White women have begun to understand the power and justice in the anti-racism movement and how to support our BIPOC sisters (and brothers).</p> <p>Young people of high school age and even younger are demanding to learn about climate change, racism, and feminism. racial justice and economic justice.</p> <p>I am of the firm belief that we cannot go backwards and <i>will</i> go forwards, together.</p> <p>Our movement will include elders’ perspectives as well as those amid careers.</p> <p>It will come about through marches and in planning, in songs and in late-night journalism, in office buildings, in schools, and in courtrooms.</p>	<p>Our faith</p> <p>Our fortitude</p> <p>Our collective energy</p> <p>Our individual courage</p> <p>Our ownership of our citizenship</p> <p>Our unwavering willingness to endure in the face of a weakening social fabric that tears at our souls</p>
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3. How can we work together across cultures to assure progress for girls and women over the next millennium?

<p>We can listen.</p> <p>We can be willing to be uncomfortable, make mistakes and go on.</p> <p>We can believe in the power of stories as a way to know each other.</p> <p>We can include all ages, all cultures, all people, men, and women, in our activist efforts to bring equity to women as well as men in all areas of the economy, healthcare decision-making, education, and autonomy in this difficult time in our country.</p> <p>Our lives are entwined</p>	<p>Continue to be assertively active in dismantling systems of oppression</p> <p>Continue to focus our collective efforts on the global goal of all women’s freedoms</p> <p>Contribute to work to ensure that resources are established that create independence for women and girls</p> <p>Continue to promote systemic structures that design new ways of education, and build paths of social-emotional and economic futures that are real preparation for the next millennium for all citizens</p>
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Honoring Women



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**Our Time ~ Our Voices ~ Our Stories ~ Our Future
Our Journey ~ Our Strength ~ Our Path**

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Looking forward

Reflections: Voices of Honor for Beverly Cottman

Beverly Cottman was a supporter, facilitator, and writer for the African American Registry. We dedicate this issue to her. Her poems are included in this issue, received just 6 weeks before she died. She was a spirit, a joy, and a bringer of tales, songs, and laughter. We will miss her.



March 26, 2023

North News

“From her library of African fables and folktales, storyteller **Beverly Cottman** offered a blessing that, in part, gave thanks to the ancestors for the lessons they left behind. Call their names and know they are listening.

The teacher, artist, and the beloved griot known as Auntie Beverly joined the village of ancestors on March 11, passing away in her sleep during a trip to Egypt with friends. She had just turned 80. Not long after the news of her passing was posted on Facebook by Kenna Cottman, tributes poured in from across the country. There were messages from storytelling groups and former students of her science class at North High School. Others were artists who had grown from the gentle encouragement of Cottman and her husband, Bill, a photographer, and writer. Their roles in promoting the arts in North Minneapolis continue to flourish.”

By **David Pierini**, *Editor*

Star Tribune, 3/24/2023

“If you're looking for an epitaph for Beverly Cottman — a longtime Minneapolis high school biology teacher and prolific Black storyteller who died this month at 80 — just use her own words.

‘I aspire to be a teller of universal truths,’ the woman known as Auntie Beverly once said, ‘to provide emotional depth by the way I tell, and to bring the wisdom of the ages to these troubled times.’

Or, ‘An imaginative mind can overcome many obstacles. Storytelling is the key to developing an imaginative mind.’

Or, ‘A story that makes you feel as if you can do anything, that you have the ability to reach and surpass your goals, or that you have the wisdom of the ancestors pushing you forward with love, is perhaps the most powerful tool of storytelling.’

“Beverly Cottman became the very definition of a renaissance woman: a teacher and dancer and fabric artist, a storyteller who interpreted and performed African fables and African-American folk tales, an energetic docent at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, a gracious host who whipped up soul food meals for big groups of fellow artists, a mentor to students and an elder in her community.”

"She had such an impact because she was a storyteller, an artist, and a scientist — a true teacher," said Vusumuzi Zulu, co-founder of the Black Storytellers Alliance, of which Cottman was a member. "She had a very nice, soft, smooth style of storytelling with a smile that was infectious."

By **Reid Forgrave**

I Am from

Beverly Cottman

I am from streetcar riding Black women who traveled
from—two flower pots on front porch railings
to--wide green lawns and rose gardens
that stretched and ironed uniforms neatly folded
in brown paper bags

jazz music coming from a hi fi console
78rpm discs spinning in a hypnotic blur

School clothes to play clothes to Sunday clothes
Black patent leather Mary Janes
Bright white socks and cotton gloves
Stretched crinolines, felt circle skirts dyed to match sweater sets
Clip-on earrings and a string of (not real) pearls

Baked ham, macaroni and cheese, collard greens, hot rolls
Washed down with cool sweet tea,
Pineapple -upside-cake for dessert

-prayers on knees before bed, deep sleep, and
Sweet dreams



from then to now

Beverly Cottman

Seamed nylons and white gloves
hard pressed hair and high heeled shoes straight skirt with matching sweater set cultured pearls
and clip-on earrings

Legs crossed — but only at the ankles Friday night fish. Good grades

Only a touch of makeup dancing in moonlight

creating works that whirl and twirl in the wind

Listening to grandchildren who know their beauty and power telling tales of history, keeping
culture, whispering the future from behind the veil of invisibility called elder

Riotous colors of African prints
thinning grey wrapped in head-ties of red and purple flat shoes — *no nylons at all!*

Black diamond faceted, senseless and susceptible
hibiscus, lime, ginger, soy — sated yet still ravenous looking out at the sea, reborn with each
incoming wave

Too much? No. More than enough!



How I Learned That I Was a Girl

Stacy Amaral

I loved to play everything that required a body, legs, arms allowed me to run and catch balls of all sizes, jack balls, and little pink ones for hitting the walls. Playing "A My Name Is" Ana and my husband's name is Al. Husband? All girls have husbands. Yes? No?

I had short legs and very Bad Hair. Neither got in my way of moving.

Looking into the mirror I saw what the world saw, a tiny girl with Wildness on Top. Where would this take me? Not too far as I found out one day walking home from school for lunch.

Billy K ran up behind me to yell, "They could turn you over, use you as a broom."
All the while singing "The Shrimp Boats are Coming."

Who were 'they'? Soon I found out.

I was in the first grade, Billy in the fifth. Some power distance, huh?

So I took a rock and threw it at him. Missing by yards and what do you think he did, laughing all the way?

The rock hit my neighbor boy, Robert. Poor Robert, he was one mess of a boy. No grace poor Robert and telling on me.

I ate lunch. The knock came, Robert and his mother, an ill-favored woman with ugly shoes.

"Your girl threw a rock at my Robert."

FWAP, my mother slapped me. "Teach you to throw rocks."

Nobody knew about Billy K.

Unaware that my trial had not ended I returned to school where I was sent to the principal's office.

Faced with Mr. Hall who had to look far down to see me, "This is not how young ladies act."

Losing that series of battles, I began to plan very own Tet Offensive, training myself.

Unbeknownst to me that battle was A Gift. Now looking back over decades, a mother, foster mother, grandmother teacher, counselor, interpreter, activist, friend I see it so clearly.

The Gift of Lessons

The Lesson: To Start with the kindest foot. Even when wary, and one often needs to be wary, be kind. Be wary of the Billys There are so many. Be kind to the Roberts. There are so many.

The Lesson: To Pay Attention. More than one thing is going on. Look Underneath. Underneath the hair, the cruelest words.

The Lesson: To Worry not about the Officials, be they your mother, a principal. They may be in your way for a few minutes. They will move if only from boredom.

The Lesson: To Take no shit. Stand as tall as possible, as tall as 4' 10'' will take you. Stand there and stand there and WATCH. Keep watching

Thank you, Billy K., I am still watching for you, for Robert too.

I'm watching for all the children I've taught across continents.

I am watching for the tired mothers and others who boycotted buses in DC during the civil rights movement.

I am watching for the people waiting for the trains to go home on this cold January Friday.

I am watching for the boys throwing balls and the girls jumping over ropes and through hoops.

You and me.

We are one. As long as we watch for each other.



A Little Black Girl's STEM Journey

By Dr. Karen Ruth-Jarmon

It is not unusual for black girls in middle school to feel that STEM disciplines are beyond their reach. Often it is the case that what is most needed is support from parents, teachers, counselors, as well as, opportunities to explore. Additionally, resilience and belief in self must be present. As more black women engage in STEM careers, it is important that they tell their authentic stories as a means of encouraging their little sisters.

Introduction

Deciding to pursue a degree in STEM is often a difficult decision for black girls. Statistics from *Catalyst* (2022), demonstrate in 2019 1.8 % of African American women were employed in STEM fields. During the 2019-2020 academic year, 3% of African American women received STEM degrees. For those of us who made the decision to enter science, math, engineering, or technology there is a story of our journeys that may be of encouragement to our little sisters. This story is one of a little black girl's journey into the world of STEM.

In the Beginning

It was Christmas time in the 1960s and a mom was trying to figure out what to get her young daughter for a present. "Mama, I don't like playing with dolls. I want a chemistry set!" The child thought that her plea went unheard because all her sisters liked playing with dolls. Therefore, why would Mom do anything different just because she asked? She tried to explain to her mama why she was different. "Mama, I don't want to be a mommy, I want to be a chemist." Her mother looked at her kindly, her green eyes sparkling in the light. "Honey, you don't have to be a mommy if you don't want to. I've had enough babies for all my girls!" They laughed about that one. Mama Ruth was mother to six girls and one boy, and unbeknownst to her, she wasn't finished. "Mama, will Daddy be okay with it?" "You let me worry about that," she responded.

The young girl walked away with some hope in her heart. A chemistry set was something she had wanted since she saw her next-door neighbor's big set. "Bobby, what is that you've got?" "It's a chemistry set, Karen." "Wow, what do you do with it?" "Come closer and take a look." Karen inched closer to the huge chemistry set. She watched with wonder while Bobby mixed this chemical with that chemical and saw color changes, fizzing, and bubbles. She had never seen anything like that before and she wanted to touch it but dared not ask. Bobby was older than her and might not appreciate her touching it. Karen was just happy to see it and immediately knew that she wanted one too. Now she was relying on her mama to convince her dad that a chemistry set was okay for a little Black girl.

Finally, it was Christmas morning. Karen ran down the steps hoping with all her heart that the chemistry set was there. She patiently waited until it was her turn to open her gift. As she tore off the wrapping, she prepared herself to be disappointed, but there it was a chemistry set! Her sisters didn't get it. "What's that," they asked. "It's a chemistry set, she responded excitedly." Her sisters wondered what she was going to do with that as they played with their dolls and games and read their new books. Her little brother didn't seem interested in anything besides his brand-new ball and bat.

Classroom Realities

"Mama and Daddy thank you so much! I am going to start playing with it right now." Her mother warned her to be careful and not make a mess. Karen barely heard the warning. She was off to begin her science journey. Childhood desires soon turned into classroom expectations. Science classes were interesting and fun, but math was a challenge. She was fine until her teacher started to talk about proving theorems. That was when she made the decision to drop her honors math class and try regular math. No one made any attempt to dissuade her or help the teacher understand why his style of teaching was problematic for the budding scientist. She began to feel like she wasn't smart enough, and thought about lowering her expectations. It didn't help that her white middle school counselor told her that she should aim for something that was a more realistic profession for her. That comment haunted her for a long time. It caused her to be less confident and more conflicted about her dream. But that dream just wouldn't die.

As middle school ended and high school stood before her, Karen discovered that English, German, Social Studies, and Music came easily to her, but math and science were both a challenge, but she still loved her science. As if the school wasn't enough to deal with, racial problems were occurring at school. Bomb threats, walkouts by the white students, and problems with teachers who felt that the Black girls were too radical. An edict preventing them from gathering in groups of more than three was put in place. All of these things were affecting her grades in her most difficult classes. Through it all, her love of science never wavered.

The Struggles of Post-secondary Education

Finding her way to college would not be easy. Karen's father had an 8th grade education, and her mother was busy caring for seven other children. The high school counselor didn't seem to be concerned about Karen even going to college. Long story short, she was on her own. Howard University was where she wanted to go, but it was too expensive, and she had no idea how to put the money together to go. Perhaps she was headed for the factory just like many of her friends had done. One night out of nowhere there was a call from a school in Illinois. They were looking for minority students with at least a B average who would be interested in attending their school, but a quick decision had to be made. They had grants available, but time was running out.

The vetting process was something that Karen didn't know much about. The school showed her pretty pictures, promised money, was close enough to drive to, and had a solid science program. She was all in! After two years, she transferred to Indiana University where she fell in love with microbiology. Finally, she knew exactly what she wanted to study thanks to her professor. He was there for her when she didn't understand a concept and told her that she was smart and should reach higher. This led her to decide to study microbiology after graduating from Indiana University with a degree in Biology. Six months later she entered the microbiology program at Clemson University. Karen was the first African-American female to enter the program.

Clemson was a tough place to be academically, culturally, and emotionally, but she survived and sometimes thrived. More than one mistake was made along the way, but she kept her goal in front of her and kept it moving.

That little girl who loved science was a woman when she graduated with a Master of Science degree in Microbiology, and that was just the beginning of her science journey. Was it easy? No. Did she always make good decisions? No. Did she give up on her dream? No. And neither should any other little black girl who has a dream, whether it's science, math, engineering, or anything else.

Reflection and Hope

Looking back, it doesn't feel like much has really changed. My black girl students don't express much confidence in themselves in STEM subjects. They often feel ignored, underserved, or unsupported at home. By the time I get them in eighth grade, I see a lack of resilience that worries me. I share my story with them to show that you don't have to be a genius to be in STEM, just determined. Now that I have retired, I look for other ways to engage them. My science journey transformed my life, and I want that for them.



My Planned Parenthood Story

Julie Landsman

Growing up in Connecticut, I was a physical girl, climbing into the woods around the stonewalled parts of the countryside, swimming in the ocean, and sailing a small sailfish when I was old enough to go out alone. I also was the daughter of conservative parents, stunned as four of their five children became activists in the 60s and until now, in our aging lives. I am seventy-eight. What I have been reminded of, as I talked with my siblings, who live all over the country, is that even in their conservatism, my parents believed firmly in Planned Parenthood and birth control. My mother volunteered to get the word out all her life. My siblings were active and married activist women and men around issues of feminism, contraception, and abortion.

In my college years, 1962-1966 I had a friend who needed to abort her pregnancy. It was a nightmare: she found someone outside of Washington DC, via a network of women, who would do the surgery. Her boyfriend had to blindfold her, bring her to a street corner at exactly the right hour, and hand her off to a driver and assistant she had never met. She described walking up some creaky stairs and being led into a back room. She was given nothing for the pain. She remained blindfolded the entire time. After the abortion, she was driven back to the same corner where they waited with her until her boyfriend came to get her. Later that night she was in such agony she ended up in the hospital emergency room. Drs said she had an infection that could take her life. They said they had seen this before and could treat her for the infection.

What I remember is the anxiety and fear I felt about getting pregnant after I was raped in 1966. I was terrified. Ultimately, I did not have to terminate the pregnancy. I did know a network of women who informed us what to say if we were trying to get an abortion through our parents' health plan: We were to describe severe menstrual pain in a certain language in order for doctors to perform a D&C procedure without naming it.

I am proud to say that my son and his 13-year-old son marched in the recent rallies for abortion rights in New York City. My brother, his wife, and his daughters marched in the same event in North Carolina as I and a sister and her partner did here in Minneapolis.

We pass down the work of women's freedom. Family can support activism in each state in every part of the USA. Even though she was conservative, my mother often talked about Dr. C. Lee Buxton, who was a neighbor and a pioneer in contraceptive support, and the legal action he took to make it legal. He was a giant in this cause. I knew Buxton's son, a minister, with whom I marched in the Selma Montgomery march.

What I believe these causes have in common is freedom...freedom for all those who are women, including those who are Black, Brown, Asian, or Indigenous, to have dominion over our bodies and our very lives. We can be a powerful force.

I thought we had secured progress since my friend walked down the stairs and out into the hot DC afternoon, to sit, blindfolded. as she waited. I thought we had secured voting rights for all in this country. I thought, through basic health care, women could have choices when finding themselves pregnant. I am amazed and disheartened to be fighting for these same freedoms again. I am hopeful, though: because there are strong women and men, young and old, who believe in these rights, these freedoms, and are unafraid to express their belief in the dignity of every person in this country to make his or her decisions, to vote without harassment, to be in charge of her own body We are in this together.

Time to march, over and over, if necessary. Time for our daughters and sons to feel truly empowered. Time to support Planned Parenthood in its decades-long effort to provide for all of us, our children, and our grandchildren, to have the care and autonomy that is their basic right.



The Complex “Manscape” for Women

Kate Towle

Like the word *race*, the word *woman* is a social construct. In the Bible, as well as the Old English vernacular, a woman needs a man to validate her existence: the *wo* in woman stands for a *wife*.ⁱ

Since I identify as a woman and use gender pronouns, she/her/hers, I can speak to my own trajectory in becoming more fully myself. From the time I could speak, I was immersed in spiritual language that prioritized a male God—a dynamic that continues. At five years old, the only thing I wanted for Christmas was a wedding dress. I had already internalized the importance of tethering myself to a man and that my body was expected to be an object of beauty.

After my father was killed when I was ten, our “single mother” and family wage-earner worked the night shift as a nurse. While my father had preferred that she not have to work, we were grateful that she kept her nursing skills and license current. In every way, she took care of all aspects of tending a home: she mowed the lawn, fixed appliances, and paid the bills. She hit her limit when she climbed up on the roof and froze because she was afraid of heights. She was still part of the generation that found employment in male-led systems via nursing, teaching, and secretarial work. I was 11 years old when Helen Reddy’s song, *I Am Woman*, became code to empower ourselves as women—and womanhood in general. The song came out in November 1972, after the U.S. Senate passed the Equal Rights Amendment (first proposed by the National Woman’s Party in 1923) in March 1972. It was sent to the states for ratification, but it was never ratified by *three-fourths* of the states—a signal then that insidious conservative resistance has not upheld gender equality for the U.S. Constitution (except for the right to vote).ⁱⁱ It is time to revisit that amendment.

I was blessed to have strong women as role models in positions of power—university professors, scientists, and published authors. As a young woman, I had a subscription to Ms. Magazine and admired Gloria Steinem for her leadership and audacity. (Note: even the prefix “Ms.” stems from the word *mistress* with its own misconceptions.)

When my *daughter* was born, I defied gender stereotypes as best I could, dressing her in blue and yellow and buying her trucks, tractors, and tools in addition to dolls. I took a pen to Mother Goose’s rhymes to edit out the violence. I was mindful to not talk to her about dieting, and while I bought her a baby doll, it was Black. I did not know the depth of internalized oppression from sexism and racism, but I was working on it.

I took it for granted that we were moving forward with women’s rights. When my brother came out as a gay man, I believed the continuum of gender rights would slide in a progressive direction. By the time I became sexually active, I had internalized that I had a right to an abortion, but more importantly, to choose what was right for my body. I did not see the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark Supreme Court case that established the constitutional right to abortion, decided when I was 12 years old, in 1973.

Believing that gender equity was gaining speed, I saw our more urgent issue as racial justice. My daughter and I worked together at her school to host dialogues about race—an effort that won the 2011 Facing Race Idea Challenge. The program became a leadership program through which students could teach the community about their experiences in life and in the

classroom. Five years later, when my son participated, students from our group were drawn to another student group: Gender Equity. My son was one of two identifying as “male” who attended the group. It was at that point that I realized that understanding our gender rights is a developmental process like any other—just as with any other area of study and growth, our goal is to increase our skills and awareness. **Only through understanding the construct of race could I see how far we had to go in our understanding of gender equity—and no dialogue about Roe v. Wade supports gender equity without considering the intersecting effects of gender and race.**

My Black friends face racial discrimination and stereotypes *in addition to* our gender challenges. They face prejudice from men *and* women, that leads to poor health outcomes and lower income. That bias constricts their access to healthcare, education, and housing even as Black women are tasked, in a way I am not, to bring resources back to their community. As women in the workplace, they join me in being underestimated, restricted from leadership, and disparaged when they express disappointment or anger—emotions afforded to men, but stereotyped as *aggressive* with women.

In 1989, Columbia Law School professor and civil rights activist, Kimberlé Crenshaw, introduced the idea of *intersectionality* to get us thinking of the parallels of systems of domination and how social identities overlap with one another. It wasn't until I engaged deeply into racial justice work in education—in the early 2000s—that I learned of Ms. Crenshaw's pioneering work.

On the path to liberation, we're called to live with paradox. Black Lives Matter was started by three Black organizers, two of whom identify as queer, or as having a gender identity that does not conform to the woman/man binary. Yet, in October 2022, the prominent Black reporter and White House Correspondent, April Ryan, released her book, *Black Women Will Save the World: An Anthem*, honoring the identity, strength, and resilience of Black Women.ⁱⁱⁱ

The politics of gender still hold excessive sway over my own access to quality healthcare and earnings. Our society still does not value the act of caregiving in the family, which I've had to do for my aging parents and my brother, who lived 35 years with HIV-AIDS. Women's health is sorely under researched and underfunded. Whether I've needed expensive, 3-D exams because of dense breast tissue, or therapies for chronic pain from a childbirth procedure, I have paid the price for bearing children. To support my own vision of reparations from slavery, I rely on the support of my life partner, who uses the gender pronouns he/him/his. We know that our sacrifice will not be understood or modeled by many people.

There are two levels of work ahead: a commitment to continued growth in inclusive, equitable practices—and work with forums like the African American Registry to actively envision and sustain such practices in society. Meanwhile, I still put my lipstick on, learn how to say “woman” in Spanish, and use the masculine pronoun “ils” in French (the default for plural groups), when referring to a group of all women and one man. When I see *women* and *men* on bathroom doors, I sigh and am reminded that our work is just beginning.



In Praise of Mama

Debra Stone

In praise of mama
Let us praise the mama
Who kissed your boobos
told you to get up &
ride your bike like a
big girl who told you
stop rolling your eyes
even though her back
was turned who whipped
your behind on the days
you were just too much
who came to every parent
teacher conference
play
reading
games
teas
dinner
luncheon
shopping
who called you every Sunday
who held you when men
you thought loved you
broke your heart
who cooked your favorite food on
your birthday

Let us praise this sweet woman
Resting now with the mama
Ancestors
Ardenia
Sarah
Fannie
Zenobia
Espanolia
Loudie
Opal
Let us not forget
The disappeared sold to
Unknown plantations
Unmarked graves
Let us praise the mamas
Hallelujah
Hallelujah
Hallelujah
Amen



Resources and References

Provided by Julie Landsman

Below is a somewhat historical list of what got me through growing up in a time when women were not expected to have a say. These books still resonate when I think of other countries, of the USA even now, and of those women who are struggling to be heard, educated, respected in our troubled world.

Our Bodies Ourselves : The Boston women's Health Collective, Best Selling Classic, informing and Inspiring Women Across Generations, Touchstone Edition, 2011. Originally published 1984. A guide to health for women, including the health care system, environmental health risks, Body Image, Activism, safer sex.

Ms. Magazine: Ms. is an American feminist magazine co-founded in 1971 by journalist and social/political activist Gloria Steinem. It was one of the first national American feminist magazines.

Lucille Clifton: *Blessing the Boats: New and Selected Poems 1988–2000* (BOA Editions, 2000)
won't you celebrate with me/what i have shaped into/a kind of life? i had no model.
born in Babylon/both nonwhite and woman/what did i see to be except myself?
i made it up/here on this bridge between/starshine and clay,/my one hand holding tight/my other hand; come celebrate/with me that everyday/something has tried to kill me/and has failed.

Susan Griffin: *Chorus of Stones*, 1992, Doubleday, A rethinking of gender, the environment, war and violence. It explores the broader topics of truth and lies, secrecy and revelation, private and public realm.

June Jordan's *Poetry for the People, A Revolutionary Blueprint*, 1995, Routledge. A blueprint for revolutionary teaching, including 'Word of Mouth: Staging a Revolutionary Reading,' Poem: "Poetry should Ride the Bu" by Ruth Forman, connections to the community. Chapters by remarkable poets from across the United States, on how to teach subversively, so that students can find a voice to make a statement about the world they live in. This book prepared me to understand spoken word, rap, Afro-American poetry and what a teacher can create in her classroom.

Philip Levine, *The Simple Truth*, 1994, and *What Work Is*, 1991, Knopf. His poems are elegies for people who work, who persist, 9-5 jobs. "If I went/to the window now and gazed/ down at the city stretching/ in clear winter sunlight past/the ruined park the children/never visit, would I cry and for whom?" from "Winter Words Manhattan"

(Landsman cont.)

Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, 1937, J.B. Lippincott. This is a book of language, of love, of African American history in novel form. It taught me more than any formal class about linguistics, language, song of words, and culture.

Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, a [novel](#) by the Russian author [Leo Tolstoy](#), was first published in book form in 1878. This book has a universe in it, love, war, sorrow, strong women, and tragedy. Rereading it I learn something new each time about life.

Howard Zinn, *SNCC the New Abolitionists*, 1964, Haymarket Books. This book by a white man captures the time when we fought side by side, white and Black, for the right to vote for all citizens. It is a historical document and you sense the time of hope it embodies when I grew up believing we could change the country.

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, 1987, Alfred Knopf, “I used to think to think it was my *re-memory*. You know. Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it's not. Places, places are still there.” This book is dense with characters, history, slavery and beauty. It dropped down into layers of thought and understanding I had not experienced before. Novels teach to the heart.

Provided by Dr. Karen Ruth-Jarmon

Women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM): Quick take. Catalyst (2022).

Provided by Kate Towle

Ryan, April. *Black Women Will Save the World: An Anthem*. Amistad, an Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2022.

WKMS By. “What's the Word?- ‘Woman.’” WKMS, WKMS, 31 Jan. 2019, <https://www.wkms.org/education/2019-01-31/whats-the-word-woman>.

“Equal Rights Amendment Passed by Congress.” History.com, A&E Television Networks, 9 Feb. 2010, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/equal-rights-amendment-passed-by-congress>.

Co-Editors

Julie Landsman: is a retired teacher, poet, writer, and activist. She has published three memoirs and poems in various magazines. She is also a visual artist who loves to work with color, music, story, and truth. She works as a mentor for the Minnesota Prison Writers Workshop and visits classrooms when invited to talk about civil rights, writing, art, and anti-racist education.

Yvonne RB-Banks, Ed.D: is grounded in her beliefs that educational equity means universal access to quality education for ALL. Everything she does is tied to those beliefs. The journey continues to be fulfilling through her contributions as an author, world traveler, editor, and supporter of student scholars on the path of sustaining a good world ~ the best world possible

Guest Contributors

Stacy Amaral: Coming from an immigrant family of Jews and Latinos Stacy Amaral has been closely listening to the stories of people around her since she was born in Brooklyn, NY, 77 years ago. As soon as she could hold a pencil, she began to write these stories. She has edited two books of interviews with immigrants, taught school for many years in Massachusetts, Puerto Rico, and Nicaragua, and continues to teach in Chelsea, Massachusetts another city of immigrants. Besides writing and teaching, Stacy is a mother, foster mother, and grandmother.

Dr. Karen Ruth-Jarmon: 25+ years in the field of STEM with 13 years in various leadership positions in corporate America she is noted as the first in many arenas. At a major American medical device company, she was the first African American to lead a team of engineers in the company's history. She was instrumental in achieving regulatory approval for several pacemakers in the challenging Japanese market Dr. Ruth-Jarmon has a talent for breaking down barriers; making people feel included and listening to build a strong team. She brings broad skills from various management positions in veterinary vaccine production. As an educator, she keeps making a difference every day, and currently is the president of the Association of Black Women in Higher Education-MN Chapter and serves as the Financial Secretary for the National Chapter. Dr. RJ, as she is called by those that know her best, credits her love of science to the encouragement she received from her parents, a Methodist minister, and a housewife. Dr. RJ is a wife to Jeffrie and a mother to Jamaal. Her hobbies include tennis, watching Marvel movies, and dancing.

Debra J Stone: 2023-2025 James Hill Fellow in Literature, and 2023 The Loft ~ Mirrors and Windows Fellow, We Need Diverse Books. Her work can be found at:

- <https://www.debrajeanestone.com>

Kate Towle: Author of the novel, Sweet Burden of Crossing, a story that emphasizes the themes of interracial friendship, racial justice, and healing from trauma as a path to shared humanity. As a writer, community educator, and weaver, she works with organizations, non-profits, and community leaders to organize and facilitate events and story circles that advance racial and gender equity through trauma-informed community action. At the 8th Annual MLK Holiday of Service with the organization Sweet Potato Comfort Pie®, Kate was presented with the 2022 "Batter That Matters" Award for her community-building efforts.

END NOTE

The Art of Sponsorship that advances girls and women in society, is the art of inclusion that advances all of society. We hope that the centering of this body of work on themes that embrace: **Our Time ~ Our Voices ~ Our Stories ~ Our Future ~ Our Journey ~ Our Strength ~ Our Path ~ Looking Forward**, encourages broad thought, discussions, and actions that promote, and builds new bridges of access that **Honor Women**, with the end goal of reflecting a society that truly stands on the truth that the universe has enough good for everyone. So, until then **“We Must Continue to be Vigilant”**



We look forward to staying connected with you all.

- <https://aaregistry.org/>
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