

# LITERARY ARTS MAGAZINE

THE HOGGES, COWINS & SMILEY  
SOUTH FLORIDA WRITERS OF COLOR

NOVEMBER 2021

LITERARY ARTS MAGAZINE



## YOUR WORDS MATTER – WORDS HAVE POWER

Words can create the Power of Faith and Hope.

Words can create the Power of Love and Compassion.

Words can create the Power of Unity and Cooperation.

Words can create the Power of Truth, Honesty and Fairness.

Words can create the Power of Freedom, Justice and Equality.

Embracing our Literary Voices,

The Enduring Power, Creative Joy,

And Beauty of Words,

We Unleash Our Infinite

Power of Imagination and Creativity.

~Ralph Hogges

**November 2021**

**The Hogges, Cowins & Smiley  
South Florida Writers of Color  
Literary Arts Magazine**

**An Online Literary Arts Magazine**

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**November 2021, Volume 3, Number 1**

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**The Hogges, Cowins & Smiley  
South Florida Writers of Color  
Literary Arts Magazine**

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**An online literary arts magazine, *The Hogges, Cowins & Smiley South Florida Writers of Color Literary Arts Magazine* is published annually by *The Hogges and Cowins Literary Arts Promotions Media Network*. Free: No purchase or subscription required.**

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## **ACHIEVING OUR LITERARY ARTS VISION IN SOUTH FLORIDA**

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### **The Ralph Hogges, Benjamin Cowins & Delores Smiley South Florida Literary Arts Master Plan and Implementation 2016 – 2021**

#### **“Don’t Limit Your Vision**

Some of us cannot see beyond what we have experienced.

It’s not that we have sight problems.

The Problem is that we have no definitive, confident and determined Vision.

Vision to Think beyond the Unthinkable.

Vision to Believe beyond the Unbelievable.

Vision to Achieve beyond the Unachievable.

As for me, my Vision is Clear.

My Resolve is Resolute.

--- Ralph Hogges”

#### **Phase I: The Literary Arts Renaissance of Color in South Florida:**

- The Ralph Hogges and Benjamin Cowins Writers Group of South Florida
- Critique Groups’ Process, Procedure and Benefits
- The Authors’ Speak, Sign and Sell Books Circuit
- Old Dillard Museum Literary Gatherings
- Anniversary Gatherings and Celebrations
- The Hogges and Cowins Annual Literary Awards
- Community Reading Advocacy Award
- Advisory Board Members and Genre Moderators
- The Hogges and Cowins Book Festival and Writers Conference (An annual event hosted and presented in Miami, Florida’s Historic Overtown and Virtually on ZOOM)
- The Hogges, Cowins & Smiley South Florida Writers of Color Literary Arts Magazine (An Online Literary Arts Magazine), published annually.
- The ZOOM Operations & Management Team – for our Virtual literary arts events

## **Phase II: The Literary Arts Entrepreneurs of Color in South Florida:**

- CWD Literary Media Agency, founders and owners: Shelly Cameron, Thea Long White, and Susan Lycett Davis
- COBETH ONLINE BOOKSTORE, LLC, founders and owners: Rosemarie Cole, Carla Bennett and Arnetha Thomas
- Omiokun Books/ Book Publishing Company, founder and owner: Nikisha Williams
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- SME Business Services, Inc., founder and owner: Ella A. Williams
- A Plus Computer Services, founder and owner: Rudy Jackson
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## FEATURES

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### Vote Cast

By Linda Adderly

America, can you see? Our steps **are** forward, boldly AND courageously.  
Not quietly subdued as before.  
Not uninformed and unsure,  
There's a new **unclogged** awareness  
etched in our core, AND we say, "no more."

This spirit of new political opportunities **and** knowledge,  
has **altered** our very thoughts.  
No more blanket approvals, nor trusting devotion,  
for **OUR** vote cannot be bought!

Hungry for truth, justice and a slice of political power.  
**If not NOW... then, when?** No, this IS Our hour!

This is **OUR** hour. This is our time!  
Wading through the muck of political grime.  
We're Mobilizing, moving forward, leaving second class behind.

Battling the inequality of "**just us**" laws, **while** advancing civil rights.  
With the ballot in our hands, we take up the "good fight."  
For democracy, **TRUE** democracy is an **American** birthright!

Unchained, from political ignorance, we repeat "no more!"  
Equipped, we stand ready for YOUR voter suppression war!  
And with **this** ballot in our hands,  
Steeled-minded... we stand for **what's** right and against voter bans.

These new restrictive voting laws,  
are just a replay of Jim Crow wars.  
No more shall **YOU** turn **your** backs on justice,  
for **robbed**, we no longer will be,  
Voters disenfranchised by others searching for acceptable voter's IDs.

No more literacy tests, poll taxes and other types of suppression.

Elections should be based upon ideals and merit,  
**not** election aggression!  
And mark our words, we will stay the course until it's done,  
For voter inequity hurts not only us, but everyone.

Gerrymandering, discouraging ... your strategy?  
Undermining, our collective value, is NOT equality!  
People of color, the young, the elderly  
**Will not** be bound by past history!

In the democratic process of red, white and blue.  
**We** are the generation who will **ASSURE** this truth,  
And with the ballot **secure** in our hands,  
**We** can and will, direct as initially planned this promised land!

**America, OUR VOTE HAS BEEN CAST!**

# **Why African Americans and Brown People Should Be Vaccinated Against COVID – 19**

**By Bea L. Hines**

As America nears the two-year mark of battling first COVID–19, and now the added DELTA variant, I tend to be a bit confused as to why so many Black and Brown people simply refuse to get vaccinated against this pandemic. This virus is no joke. It has already taken the lives of more than 700,000 Americans as of this writing. What is the problem? Why is it so hard to get so many people – especially Black and Brown people, to understand the seriousness of the situation and get vaccinated? Is it stubbornness or just plain stupidity?

In my lifetime I have been blessed to see many childhood diseases such a polio and measles eradicated through the administration of vaccines. Today, you hardly hear of a child, or any adult, for that matter, dying from diseases like polio or the measles or whooping cough. We can thank our Lord, and the scientists who worked day and night to come up with the vaccines that have given us a better chance of a healthy life.

Growing up I remember vividly the polio epidemic. I remember the times we couldn't go to the movies or to the beach because it wasn't safe to be among large crowds. I remember having to stay indoors during summer vacations because of the polio threat. And I remember two of my friends who contracted polio and were left crippled, having to wear leg braces for the rest of their lives. Yet, some others weren't so fortunate: polio caused them to have to spend the rest of their lives in an iron lung. Some even died.

I can imagine how thankful our parents must have been when a polio vaccine was discovered by Dr. Jonas Salk. Some of us still have the round scars on our upper arm, where the needle pumped the life-sustaining vaccine into our bodies. I remember being vaccinated and then having the booster shot for years afterwards.

Our parents were scared. They had heard rumors about the Tuskegee experiment that was still going on when I was a child. Yet, polio was not a Black or White disease. It affected everyone, and when the time came, our parents swallowed their fear and got us vaccinated. Some of us are here today because of their decision to put their children's health above their fear and suspicion.

As a Black woman, I can understand the skepticism of some other Blacks who are afraid to take the COVID-19 vaccines. In the Tuskegee experiment, Black men were denied medication for syphilis, causing many to die painful deaths, while also passing the disease on to their spouses. Given this history, many Blacks still use the Tuskegee experiment as reason enough not to trust our medical system. They ask, "Why should we believe that we will be treated fairly during this pandemic, and not used as guinea pigs to test the new drugs?"



This is a valid question. What happened to the men in the Tuskegee experiment left a terrible stain on America's soul. Still, that was more than 80 years ago and while many Blacks still have real trust issues with the medical system, more Blacks are dying every day of COVID-19, because they were too afraid to be vaccinated. We cannot use an experiment that is more than 80 years old to dictate to us if we should take the vaccine or not. Back then, Blacks were denied medication that could have cured them. Today, we have available to us medication that has already proven to save lives. While it is not fool proof (a small number of vaccinated people have died after contracting COVID-19), the vaccine is the best defense we have against the deadly virus.

I have friends and family members who refuse to get vaccinated. These are educated people, who you would think, should know better than to play with their lives. One person said, "Oh, I know the pros and cons of the vaccine... perhaps I will take it someday..."

Sadly, someday for my friend could just be too late.

Another person said, "I don't know what's in the vaccine..."

Neither does she know what's in the hotdogs she like to eat.

We Blacks make up 13 percent of the American population. Yet, we make up nearly 25 percent of COVID-19 deaths. That alone, should be enough for us to think about how we feel about being vaccinated. The way I see it, Black and Brown people, more than anyone else, need to adhere to the urging of those in the medical profession who watch for our health. They know the statistics better than most of us, that COVID-19 is taking us out in larger numbers than our white peers.

COVID-19 has affected every Black person in America; we all have lost someone close to us, or someone we know, to this deadly virus. COVID-19 is a killer. And it seems like Black and Brown people are its primary target.

While we know that the vaccine isn't totally fool proof, other than prayer and faith in the Lord, the vaccine is our only defense against this deadly virus. We owe it to ourselves to fight this killer with all we have.

# Why We Need Reparations for the Color of COVID

By Jose E. Alvarez<sup>1</sup>

The solid case for reparations for African-Americans is built on centuries of racist government actions at the federal and state level. As Ta-Nehisi Coates put it back in 2014, it is built on policies to sustain slavery, Jim Crow, separate but 'equal' schools, and racist housing and welfare policies extending to the present day.<sup>2</sup> Since January 2020, that case has become only stronger given COVID's starkly disproportionate effects on communities of color throughout the United States. Throughout the world, there is evidence that government policies during the current crisis have exacerbated pre-existing discriminatory policies directed at vulnerable groups. Globally, persons all too frequently defined by the color of their skin have suffered the gravest COVID consequences. There is an inescapable moral and legal case for reparations for the color of COVID in the U.S. and around the world.

The numbers in the U.S. speak for themselves: members of the African-American, Latinx, and indigenous communities suffered the steepest declines in life expectancy during the crisis. Persons of color have been the most infected, the likeliest to need hospitalization and die; they have been the most likely to become unemployed and the most likely to suffer housing insecurity. The disparate impact of COVID is the predictable outcome of the legacies noted by Coates and others. COVID, it turns out, was not the 'great equalizer' many expected. It predictably penalized those "essential workers" who could not just choose to stay home, those with no health insurance, those unable to socially distance given their housing or less able to mitigate the virus' consequences by securing medicines, ventilators, or vaccines. The data indicates that COVID's discriminatory impact holds true even if one holds constant variables like comorbidities. Efforts to 'blame the victim' by suggesting that persons of color in places as different as the U.S., Brazil, and India were more 'susceptible' to the disease won't fly. The plight during the current pandemic of persons of color in the U.S., like those with less favored pigmentation in Brazil, or those of disfavored caste in India is a social construct. The color of COVID, no less than the color of Ebola, was not an accident.<sup>3</sup> Government policies account for the color of COVID both in the

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert and Rose Rubin Professor of International Law, NYU School of Law.

<sup>2</sup>Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations," *The Atlantic* (June 2014). See also William A. Darity and A. Kirsten Mullen, From Here to Equality Reparations for Black Americans in the Twenty-First Century (2020).

<sup>3</sup>See, e.g., Matiangai Sirleaf, "Ebola Does Not Fall from the Sky: Structural Violence and International Responsibility," 51 *Vanderbilt J. Transn'l L.* 477 (2018).

U.S. and abroad. By enabling differential access to the right to health care and its essential components – from decent housing to levels of wealth that enable privileged groups in all three countries to have greater access to testing, better health care, and forms of government relief – and by taking consciously discriminatory actions over the past 18 months, governments have been treating some people as effectively disposable.

The arguments against general reparations for African-Americans – that the financial costs are too steep, that the White taxpayers of today should not be made liable for the sins of prior generations, and that too many intervening factors explain the current plight of African-Americans – have been answered by others and need no refuting here. But even if those arguments were acceptable at face value, none of them serve to rebut the exceptionally strong legal and political case for reparations by governments to persons within their own respective jurisdictions who have been victimized by the color of their skin or by disfavored ethnic status in the age of the coronavirus. Specific government actions and inactions not in the distant past but today – such as our government’s regulations requiring meat processing plants to continue to operate despite predictable consequences on the persons of color employed there, discriminatory actions at the border with respect to those seeking entry, or refusals to protect migrant workers – account for the color of COVID.

National laws that prohibit actions by governments that discriminate on the basis of race or ethnicity can provide the legal basis for accountability but reparations are also demanded by states’ international legal obligations. Under all significant human rights treaties as well as the UN Charter, all states are obligated not to discriminate on such bases (or other social status) with respect to enumerated human rights – including the right to life.<sup>4</sup> International law imposes an obligation on states to provide an effective remedy for any acts resulting in de jure or de facto discrimination. That obligation extends to many of the specific groups victimized in the age of the coronavirus. It encompasses refugees seeking asylum, migrant workers, those on Indian reservations, prisoners or others in state-run facilities, or persons exposed to harm in the wake of natural disasters.<sup>5</sup> The U.S., along with most states, is also a party to the WHO –

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<sup>4</sup>See, e.g., Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, Art. 1(1); Convention on Civil and Political Rights, Art. 2(1); Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Art. 1; Convention on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, Art. 2(2); UN Charter, Art. 1(3).

<sup>5</sup>See, e.g., Convention on the Status of Refugees, Art. 3; ILO Convention Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, Art.s 2(2)(a) and 3; Draft articles on the Protection of Persons in the Event of Disaster, Art. 6; Standard Minimum Rules for the Protection of Prisoners, Art. 6(1).

whose Constitution proclaims that “enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health” is a fundamental right owed to all without discrimination.<sup>6</sup> International law’s cumulative prohibitions on discrimination with respect to health also protect people from harmful governmental actions because of their multiple (intersectional) identities. International law requires effective remedies for those who suffer disproportionate harm because they are, for example, Black or Latino and female. The special solicitude for non-discriminatory access to health care reflects Martin Luther King, Jr.’s insight that “of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking and the most inhuman.”<sup>7</sup>

Under international law, “reparations” do not necessarily require full monetary compensation for all harms suffered. Beyond requiring forms of financial recompense, reparations schemes can include guarantees of non-repetition and forms of satisfaction (from truth commissions to government apologies).<sup>8</sup> Like reparation schemes in the wake of mass atrocities committed in the course of conflict, they can even include lustrations (restraints on the holding of public office by those deemed responsible). The flexibility of international law reparations answers the canard that COVID reparations are “too expensive” to pursue or will do more harm than good because they generate more recriminations as to who else is to blame or what victims to compensate.

International law reparations acknowledge that many government-induced harms are too great to be ever repaid. Reparations for the color of COVID, like those in the wake of the Holocaust or for the internment of Japanese-Americans, are not principally about providing full and final recompense to victims. They will, to be sure, provide a measure of solace for victims and go some way to recognizing their dignity. But international lawyers accept that attempts at reparations can prove contentious – and that indeed may be the point. The variety of measures that may constitute “reparations” demonstrate that such efforts are less about “closure” than about *provoking* “civil dissensus.”<sup>9</sup> The argument for reparations for the color of COVID within each nation where the problem exists presumes that we need to direct attention to what happened over the past 18 months if we are to have any hope of avoiding such outcomes in the future. They presume that we should not duck difficult questions of complicity; that by holding government elites accountable we can “restrain the heartless,”<sup>10</sup> while staying vigilant to ever-changing forms of discrimination. Reparations adhere to King’s vision of finding ways to generate eventual respect among adversaries or “agape.”<sup>11</sup> They are, like much of King’s efforts, a form of nonviolent discourse, channeled by law, directed at securing the mutual recognition that all life is sacred and worth protecting.

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<sup>6</sup>WHO Constitution, Preamble.

<sup>7</sup>Charlene Galarneau, “Getting King’s Words Right,” 29 J. Health Care for the Poor and Underserved,” 5 (2018)(quoting King).

<sup>8</sup>Articles of State Responsibility, Arts. 34-37.

<sup>9</sup>See generally, Jose E. Alvarez, "Rush to Closure," 96 Mich. L. Rev. 2031, at 2082-2108 (1998)(describing the merits of "civil dissensus").

<sup>10</sup>Martin Luther King, Jr., "The Case Against "Tokenism," in *A Testament of Hope*, at 107 (1986).

<sup>11</sup>Martin Luther King, Jr., "An Experiment in Love," in *id.*, at 19-20.

# **L..a..d..i..es and Gentlemen, my sister-in-law PAT WARREN**

**By Susie Ingram**

I longed to be like her.  
She's fun, exciting, daring, loved makeup and fur.  
My sister-in-law, indeed beautiful, courageous, outgoing  
She speaks with talent, always forthgoing.  
In a crowd she stood out  
Surely to make herself known without a doubt.  
My sister-in-law, she's smart  
Taught others along the way, she has a big heart.  
I was glad when I saw her coming today,  
Her knowledge went a long way.  
Tidings she brought, goodies and such talent she possessed,  
Indeed, an actor! She shut down any movie to rest.  
For she practiced, rehearsed her craft,  
She often times came by, to invite you on her raft.  
How I longed to be like her, involved and engaged,  
Surely not shy of the stage.  
Sasha, Sasha she would walk  
Converse like you are the talk.  
My sister-in-law questioned, are you ready yet?  
And together, we made this duet.

She performed this one woman show,

She performed to the end.

And I remembered it's my time

To write about my kin.

How I longed to be like her

Someday I'll get to wear that fur.

# 19 Simple-To-Use Book Marketing Tips

By Dr Shelly Cameron

*"You can't expect to just write and have visitors come to you – that's too passive."*

*--- Anita Campbell*

Writing is a passion. Authors write because they love it. Many profess that you will never get rich from writing. But as time has evolved into the 21<sup>st</sup> century authors yearn to earn profit from their quest. Here I share excerpts gleaned from research on various writers' forum.

1. Write quality books.
2. Audible is good especially with streaming services.
3. Do interviews relevant to your book's subject matter then share the link.
4. Share book reviews on social media.
5. Build your email subscribers before you launch your book.
6. Give updates about your upcoming book, or the ones you have written and publishing to your Email Subscribers.
7. Make your Presentations educational and inspiring.
8. Do Book Club Readings.
9. Conduct Virtual book signings.
10. Speeches are a great way to get your name out there.
11. Offer Promotional Book Swags.
12. Create Video Promos.
13. Find businesses or local organizations (Rotary) that will benefit from your presence and host author signings.
14. Create Regular content.
15. Pick a social media channel and stick with it.
16. Engage with your readers. Nurture your super fans.
17. Make products around your book.
18. Seek out Podcast interviews or create your own.
19. Network with others to cross-pollinate.

Interested in marketing your writing? These tips can help.

Good luck!



# 17 Things to Do When the Pen Slows and You Don't Feel Like Writing

**By Dr Shelly Cameron**

I sat staring into the distance. Pondering what to write? What to post? Haven't we all been there at one time or another? Times when we do not know what to write – be it social, blog, or book. Authors were asked to share what they do when the pen slows, and they do not feel like writing. Here are 17 Takeaways.

1. Write more often. It's a muscle that grows with patience.
2. Do something fun.
3. Try a different genre. Non-fiction writers consider writing a Short Story.
4. Draw a comic. Yikes!
5. Free write. Write about something you love without editing.
6. Write something short. It is like riding a bike.
7. Prepare several projects and switch between them when you feel the need.
8. Think of a reward that would motivate you to write more.
9. Read. It will revive your writing appetite.
10. Re-read books you found inspirational years ago to bring back lost inspiration.
11. Don't worry. Get some rest.
12. Exercise. You will be motivated again.
13. Indulge in other hobbies.
14. Take a holiday.
15. Read through your work like a reader not a writer.
16. Voice record.
17. Go with the flow.
18. Don't beat yourself up.

Personally, I suggest you write about what it feels like to not want to write. It will help others. Whatever you do, just don't give up.

Happy Writing!

## **Family Connections and Memories of Civil Rights Icons: John R. Lewis and Lillian Miles Lewis**

**By George Simpson, Jr.**

Numerous books, periodicals, television and other media documentaries have shared with America and the world the life and legacy of the civil rights icon, John R. Lewis. While I will share with you some highlights of his civil rights involvements and achievements, I will also share with you the life and legacy of a very special person in his life, his wife, Lillian Miles Lewis.

John R. Lewis, the son of a poor sharecropper from Troy, Alabama, was born on February 21, 1940. After attending segregated public schools in Pike County, Alabama, he was inspired by the Reverend Martin Luther King's Montgomery Bus Boycott.

As a student of Fisk University, John organized sit-ins at segregated lunch counters in downtown Nashville, Tennessee. In 1961, he participated in the Freedom Rides which challenged segregation at interstate bus terminals across the south. During this period, he was often beaten by white mobs and arrested by local police. From 1963 – 1966, he served as chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) which he helped create on the Fisk campus where he was a student. SNCC was one of the main youth organizations organizing sit-ins and other student activism activities.

At the age of 23, he was considered one of the Big Six Leaders of the Civil Rights Movement and the youngest keynote speaker at the March on Washington in August 1963. In 1964, John led SNCC's voter registration drives and community action programs during the Mississippi Freedom Summer.

On March 7, 1965 John and Civil Rights leader Hosea Williams led over 600 peaceful protesters on a planned march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama to demonstrate for voting rights in Alabama. While crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, the marchers were attacked and severely beaten by Alabama State Troopers in a brutal event seen on national television that became known as "Bloody Sunday." News broadcasts and photographs showing the violence and racism in the segregated South helped President Lyndon Johnson pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965. In 1966, John left SNCC to become the Director of the Voter Education Project (VEP) which helped add over 4 million black voters.

I attended Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia in the fall of 1967. It was the year that I became acquainted with Lillian Miles. She was born on March 3, 1939 in Los Angeles, California. After earning her B.A. in Social Studies at California State College in Los Angeles and the Master's

degree in Library Science from USC, she joined President John F. Kennedy's newly formed Peace Corps and taught at Yaba Tech in Lagos, Nigeria for two years.

After returning to Los Angeles, Lillian got a job with the Los Angeles County Library System and worked for my Aunt Charlotte Dean Jackson (a Fisk grad), a senior librarian. In 1965, my aunt helped her obtain a position as assistant librarian at the Atlanta University.

Upon my arrival in Atlanta, Georgia in 1967 to attend Morehouse College, my Aunt Charlotte acquainted me with Lillian. We got to know each other well and she became my "Atlanta auntie." At a 1967 New Year's Eve party hosted by pioneering Atlanta black TV host and civil rights activist Xernona Clayton, Lillian was first introduced to John R. Lewis. John and Lillian were married a year later on December 21, 1968.

John was first elected to Congress in 1986 and served for 26 years in the House. He would be the first to tell anyone who listens that Lillian was very responsible for many of his political successes and in fact she initially urged him to run for Congress against his charismatic friend and civil rights colleague Julian Bond whom he defeated in a great upset.

While John served 26 years in Congress, Lillian continued her career as an educator with an international perspective and an emphasis on Africa. She was Associate Director of the Institute of International Affairs and Development at Clark Atlanta University from 1984 – 1989 where she helped develop a major in International Studies with an emphasis on Africa and the Caribbean. From 1989 – 2003, she was Director of External Affairs in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.

### **The John and Lillian Miles Lewis Foundation**

The John and Lillian Miles Lewis Foundation was established in 2018 to advance the work and beliefs they developed over their combined 100-plus years of activism, scholarship and public service. The Foundation was set up by two of their long-time friends and associates. Its stated mission is "committed to strengthening democracy through civil engagement – with a goal of amplifying the voices of rising generations."

The foundation was set up by the following:

- Linda Earley Chastong, Esq., President & CEO, who twice served as Chief of Staff and Counsel to Congressman Lewis. She was also a Special Advisor to the Chairman of President Obama's Board of Advisors on HBCUs.
- Michael E. Collins served as the long-time Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor to Congressman Lewis wherein he directed the work of the Congressman's offices in

Washington, D.C. and Atlanta. He currently serves as Special Assistant to Vice President Kamala Harris.

In its brief history, the John and Lillian Miles Lewis Foundation has established a number of Goals and Initiatives:

- To strengthen democracy and voting rights through civic engagement.
- To increase civic engagement by building social and intellectual capital with and for youth.
- To build bridges among different ethnic, income and political groups to advance nonviolent strategies to respond to current problems and challenges.

# Retirement: The Opportunity to Engage in What We Love

By Patricia Reid-Waugh

When I announced my plan to retire at the age of sixty-three, my friends and coworkers were shocked. The word retired did not seem to belong in the same sentence as my name. I was known as energetic and vivacious, still in the prime of my productive years. No one could picture me sitting around the house all day in a drab, ill-fitting housedress doing nothing.

But I knew something they didn't. Growing up, I watched my mother retire early and then proceed to lead a fuller life, adding to her years of distinguished service as a teacher. She traveled; she entertained; she mentored; she was active in the community. Whenever I visited her, she was always getting ready to attend some event, or just getting back from one. She was living life to its fullest and being her best self.

For my mother, retirement was the time to get busy pursuing diverse interests like those just mentioned which, in combination, sweetened her journey towards self-actualization. I decided right then that I wanted to be like her when I grew up. And so, having put in my time at the office, and because I had been experiencing some health challenges, at sixty-three, it was time to go be myself before it was too late.

We often do not realize how being in the workforce limits the ways in which we can be ourselves. Similar to caring for children, working day after day puts tremendous demands on time and energy. Our true thoughts, feelings, and desires become secondary to these important obligations. Even on vacation, a part of us remains on the job because it is difficult to completely disengage from the workplace, especially in cases where the office calls to refer or consult on matters within our area of responsibility. Oftentimes, the fear of returning to an arduous workload is enough to ruin a long-planned vacation.

Retirement offers us the opportunity to disengage from all of that – and engage in what we love. In my retirement, I wanted to share and inform people of some of society's stereotypes about what it means to be retired, how the good life can really begin at any age, and encourage them to begin the planning to make it possible to do what they love in retirement.

In pursuit of that endeavor, I wrote and published the book *Retirement, A New Adventure* and regularly publish a retirement-themed newsletter *Retirement A New Adventure Newsletter*. I am on a mission to spread the word that retirement is a great time of life.

The book and newsletter are available at the following:

Retirement, A New Adventure

From:

Amazon.com

Barnes and Noble.com

[www.reidwaughbooks.com](http://www.reidwaughbooks.com)

Retirement A New Adventure Newsletter

Sign up: [www.bit.ly/retirementanewadventurenewsletter](http://www.bit.ly/retirementanewadventurenewsletter)

Email: [preidwaugh@gmail.com](mailto:preidwaugh@gmail.com)

# **The Enduring Blessings & Power of Best Friends**

**By Ralph Hogges**

I woke up this morning looking back over my life and reflecting on some of my special best friends. Then, some well known celebrity friendships came to my mind. You know them well because you have seen them on television, movies and other medias. They are the following:

- Harry Belafonte & Sidney Poitier
- Oprah Winfrey & Gayle King
- Eddie Murphy & Arsenio Hall

Over the years, I learned that there are tremendous blessings and power of having best friends. Let me take a few minutes of your time and share two vey special best friends of my life: Dr. Benjamin Cowins, Sr., & the Honorable Carrie P. Meek.

I met Dr. Benjamin Cowins, Sr., in 1978 (43 years ago) when we were employees at Florida International University (FIU). I was an Associate Dean in the Division of Student Affairs and he was Director of the Department of Career Development and Placement.

We engaged often and got to know each other very well. Both born in Georgia, the Deep South with its devastating history and traditions of racial hate, discrimination and segregation, we were involved in the civil rights movement and graduates of the historically black colleges and universities of Tuskegee Institute (Ralph, B.S. & M.Ed.) and Florida A. & M. University (Ben, B.S. & M.Ed.).

Racial discrimination was rampant and devastating against black employees at Florida International University (FIU). Ben and I became active members and joined the leadership team of the Black Employees Association. Organized, energized and mobilized, on March 27, 1978, our attorney, H. T. Smith, filed a racial discrimination Class Action Suit against the University.

The suit was settled out of court with promises made by President Crosby. When Crosby did not follow through with many of his promises, we filed a second racial discrimination Class Action Suit. We were determined to defeat the racial problems at Florida International University.

On November 9, 1979, Ben and I were invited to make presentations at the Florida A. & M. University's annual Orange Blossom Classic Educational Seminar on the "Status of Black Administrators in Florida's State University System" held on Miami Beach at the Eden Roc Hotel. After our presentations, Carrie P. Meek, a graduate of Florida A. & M. University, prominent

Democrat and member of the Florida State House of Representatives, shared with us how impressed she was with our presentations. She invited us to have lunch with her.

After earning her B.S. at Florida A.& M. University and M.S. at the University of Michigan, Meek began her professional career as a professor at Bethune-Cookman College and went on to become a professor at her alma mater, Florida A. & M. University. She moved to Miami and became Special Assistant to the Vice President of Miami-Dade Community College (North Campus). In 1979, she was elected to the Florida State House of Representatives.

On the day of our luncheon, Meek informed us of her role on the Education Committee of the Florida State House of Representatives. She talked about the importance of having authentic and definitive information from black educators in higher education throughout the State of Florida to make sound decisions and good judgement about educational bills and resources. She asked for our help in preparing and implementing a plan of action to achieve this.

We agreed to help her. Throughout the next two years, the three of us traveled and held gatherings throughout the State of Florida with black faculty and administrators of Florida's nine (9) State Universities, twenty-eight (28) public Community Colleges, and nineteen (19) private and independent Colleges and Universities. We organized and co-founded the State-Wide Organization of Concerned Black Educators in Higher Education in Florida.

Attendees at our numerous state-wide conferences spoke openly and honestly about the racial problems and issues they were encountering at their respective institutions. It was the hard-core realities information Florida House of Representative Meek needed and desired for her Education Committee.

The Honorable Carrie P. Meek would go on to become the first African American woman elected to the Florida State Senate in 1982. In 1992, she was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Florida's 17<sup>th</sup> Congressional District and became the first of three African American members elected to represent Florida in Congress since reconstruction.

Shortly after I became the Director of the Evening and Weekend College at Florida Memorial University, Ben joined this institution as the Vice President for Student Affairs. As HBCU graduates, we were pleased and delighted to be at this historically black university. In many ways, it gave us the opportunity to give back to our people and the community. We were dedicated and committed to providing our students with the highest quality of faculty, administrators, programs and support for academic excellence.

As the founder and Executive Director of the Institute for Public Policy and Executive Leadership in Higher Education for the Fischler School of Education and Human Services at Nova Southeastern University, it was designed to prepare the next generation of college and university



presidents, vice presidents and deans. I wanted to hire a Dream Team of the Brightest and Best of Senior Fellows to facilitate and teach all of the sessions of my Institute.

I intentionally gave careful and thoughtful consideration to ensuring racial and gender diversity. Toward that endeavor, my fifteen Senior Fellows included 2 Hispanics, 4 Whites and 9 African Americans. Seven were women and 8 were men.

My best friends, Dr. Benjamin Cowins, Sr., and the Honorable U.S. Congresswoman Carrie P. Meek, were my first hired Senior Fellows. The others included my NSU Colleague, Dr. Delores Smiley, Florida State Senator Daryl Jones, and several college and university presidents, vice presidents and deans. My Institute began in 2005 and was very successful.

As a co-founder and member of the Black Heritage Council (a major entity of Dr. Delores Smiley's Office of Community Education and Diversity Affairs) of the Fischler School of Education and Human Services at Nova Southeastern University (NSU), my co-workers of color and I sought and received the approval and support of Congresswoman Carrie P. Meek to establish The Carrie P. Meek Outstanding Education Leadership Achievement Award Ceremony. Held annually in February, it was designed to honor individuals who positively impact Blacks of all cultures and heritages and their contributions to the growth and development of the South Florida community.

Congresswoman Meek was our keynote speaker for those annual award ceremonies. It was a great and grand event enjoyed by the South Florida community.

In 2011, Ben and I met with Congresswoman Meek at her house. It was an occasion of reflections and looking back over our lives of involvements in civil rights, human rights, political and educational leadership. We gave her an autographed copy of our newly published book, *High Hopes and Challenging Realities: Defeating Racial Problems at Florida International University 1972 – 1982*.

After forty years of employment at three universities, I retired in 2012. In retirement, Ben and I co-founded The Ralph Hogges and Benjamin Cowins Writers Group of South Florida on July 29, 2016. In 2017, we co-founded and presented our inaugural of The Hogges and Cowins Book Festival and Writers Conference on December 9 & 10, 2017.

During the 2019 and 2020 Hogges and Cowins Book Festival and Writer Conferences, our events were held at the Carrie P. Meek Manor Apartments (Barbara Carey-Shuler Residents' Center) in Miami, Florida's Historic Overtown. If you think that venue was or is a mere coincidence, you would be wrong. This Carrie P. Meek venue has become our literary arts home.

Well, I have taken enough of your time reflecting on two of my special best friends. What I do know is that my 42 years' friendship with Ben and Carrie has been a wonderful and powerful blessing. If you have been blessed to have some special best friends, don't take them for granted. Let them know how much you appreciate them.

## Writers of Color in South Florida

Some were born in the United States. Others were born in Jamaica, Bahamas, Haiti and numerous other countries. They are the writers of color in South Florida pursuing their literary craft as beginning, emerging and established writers.

Adhering to the Philosophy, *those who don't know, come to learn; and those who know, come to teach others*, as put forth by The Ralph Hogges and Benjamin Cowins Writers Group of South Florida, they are the creative and intellectual writers, entrepreneurs and leaders of the Literary Arts Renaissance of Color in South Florida.

Because we want you to get to know about them and their books, we have provided this contact information, including their names, titles of some of their books, email addresses, and websites. We encourage you to communicate with them. Invite them to do book readings, signings and keynote speeches at your venues and events, and serve as special guests on your television, radio and social media platforms. Buy their books and share their contact information with your relatives, friends and others.

Name & Title of Books	Email Address	Website
1. Linda Adderly Book: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>From Where I Stand: Living and Breathing Words</li></ul>	<a href="mailto:addlmh@aol.com">addlmh@aol.com</a>	
2. Lorraine Allen Book: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>57 Poems Of &amp; For Life</li></ul>	<a href="mailto:llen5915@aol.com">llen5915@aol.com</a>	
3. Carla Bennett Books: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Strayed (My Journey Back) Part 1</li><li>Strayed (My Journey Continues) Part 2</li></ul>	<a href="mailto:cben.ct@gmail.com">cben.ct@gmail.com</a>	
4. Dr. Nivia Binett-Carroll	<a href="mailto:niviaphd@gmail.com">niviaphd@gmail.com</a>	
5. Vivia Bromfield Book: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>On Eagles Wings</li></ul>	<a href="mailto:vbrom1061@yahoo.com">vbrom1061@yahoo.com</a>	

- |                                                                         |                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6. Ettosi Brooks                                                        | <a href="mailto:tosisong@gmail.com">tosisong@gmail.com</a>                   | <a href="https://ettosibrooks.org">https://ettosibrooks.org</a>                                         |
| Book:                                                                   |                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| • Stori, Stori: Caribbean Tales with a Little Jazz                      |                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| 7. Thelma Calloway                                                      | <a href="mailto:thelma48@bellsouth.net">thelma48@bellsouth.net</a>           |                                                                                                         |
| 8. Dr. Shelly Cameron                                                   | <a href="mailto:shelcame@gmail.com">shelcame@gmail.com</a>                   | <a href="http://www.shellycameron.com">www.shellycameron.com</a>                                        |
| Books:                                                                  |                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| • Success Strategies of Caribbean American Leaders in the United States |                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| • Motivation Quotes to Boost Your Success                               |                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| • Green Light: When God Says Go                                         |                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| 9. Jeff Carroll                                                         | <a href="mailto:coachyojeff@gmail.com">coachyojeff@gmail.com</a>             | <a href="https://www.amazon.com/default/e/BOONEN9GOA/">https://www.amazon.com/default/e/BOONEN9GOA/</a> |
| Books:                                                                  |                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| • The Harlem Shake                                                      |                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| • Welcome to Boss Lady's Planet                                         |                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| • Rasheeda the Zombie Killer                                            |                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| 10. Dr. Joan Cartwright                                                 | <a href="mailto:asalhsouthflorida@gmail.com">asalhsouthflorida@gmail.com</a> |                                                                                                         |
| Book:                                                                   |                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| • Blues Women: First Civil Rights Workers                               |                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| 11. Dawn Ellicott Clinkscale                                            | <a href="mailto:anuday4you@gmail.com">anuday4you@gmail.com</a>               |                                                                                                         |
| 12. Rosemarie Cole                                                      | <a href="mailto:ocole8760@aol.com">ocole8760@aol.com</a>                     | <a href="http://rosemariecole.com">rosemariecole.com</a>                                                |
| Books:                                                                  |                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| • The Playground Bully                                                  |                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| • A Call to Repentance                                                  |                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| • Please Orate Enlighten Me                                             |                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| 13. Corey B. Collins                                                    | <a href="mailto:8277co@bellsouth.net">8277co@bellsouth.net</a>               |                                                                                                         |
| Book:                                                                   |                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| • The Thanks You Get                                                    |                                                                              |                                                                                                         |
| 14. Sheila Cottingham                                                   | <a href="mailto:q24sheba@yahoo.com">q24sheba@yahoo.com</a>                   |                                                                                                         |
| 15. Steven Cottingham                                                   | <a href="mailto:q24sheba@yahoo.com">q24sheba@yahoo.com</a>                   |                                                                                                         |

16. Dr. Benjamin Cowins, Sr.      [cowinsb2002us@yahoo.com](mailto:cowinsb2002us@yahoo.com)

Books:

- Positive Thoughts – They are in the mirror with you: Valued Affirmations, Motivating and Inspirational Sharings for Youths and the Young-at-Heart
- The Cowins History and Heritage: A Literary Journey about an African American Family that was anchored by Albert and Sarah Cowins in the 1800s in Warren County, Georgia
- The Vietnam War – Black Bullets, Flashbacks & Untold Truths
- The Art of Good Cursing
- High Hopes and Challenging Realities: Defeating Racial Problems at Florida International University 1972 – 1982
- Blesses and Too Smart to Fail: Inspirational Affirmations with Biblical Scripture References for Youths and the Young-at-Heart

17. Melissa Hunter Davis      [editor@sugarcane-media.net](mailto:editor@sugarcane-media.net)

18. Dr. Susan Lycett Davis      [drsueandyou@gmail.com](mailto:drsueandyou@gmail.com)      [www.drsueandyou.net](http://www.drsueandyou.net)

Books:

- I am Jamaica
- Ode to Miss Lou... From the Soul of Dr. Sue
- Living a HIP LIFE – Humble Intentional Prepared

19. Dr. Raymond Dunn      [Dunnsr859@bellsouth.net](mailto:Dunnsr859@bellsouth.net)

Books:

- The Robin That Could Not Sing
- The Little Scrub Christmas Tree

20. Vernell Everett      [vern1936@bellsouth.net](mailto:vern1936@bellsouth.net)

Books:

- Beyond Fear
- The Shady Side of the Street
- Unknown Heroes

21. Daisy Ferguson      [promed007@att.net](mailto:promed007@att.net)      [daisymferguson.com](http://daisymferguson.com)

Books:

- Congregational Prayer by the Word
- Congregational Prayer by the Word – Volume 2

22. Dr. Dorothy Jenkins Fields     [djf@bellsouth.net](mailto:djf@bellsouth.net)

23. J. Nell Ford     [143jford@comcast.net](mailto:143jford@comcast.net)

Books:

- The Doodle Bug Story
- Champ: Our Neighborhood Dog
- A Visit to Doodle Bird Island

24. Gary Francis     [gary@touchingmiamiwithlove.org](mailto:gary@touchingmiamiwithlove.org)

Book:

- Where's My Father?

25. Camille Frazer     [camfrazer@yahoo.com](mailto:camfrazer@yahoo.com)

Book:

- The Unveiling

26. Richard Gibson     [rgibson66@yahoo.com](mailto:rgibson66@yahoo.com)

27. Valda Hayden     [revvaldah@gmail.com](mailto:revvaldah@gmail.com)

28. Bea L. Hines     [bea.hines@gmail.com](mailto:bea.hines@gmail.com)

Book:

- The Ugly Feeling

29. Dr. Ralph Hogges     [ralphhogges@bellsouth.net](mailto:ralphhogges@bellsouth.net)     [www.ralphhogges.com](http://www.ralphhogges.com)

Books:

- Inspired by the Harlem Renaissance
- Poetic Splendor of the Morning
- The Love of Books and Academic Excellence: A Memoir
- Crossing the Jordan River: Reflections on My Spiritual Journey
- Forty Years in Academia: Farewell to My World of Great Books and Renowned Scholars
- Me and My Best Friend: Making the Best of Our Later Years
- Living a Purposeful and Meaningful Life: Sermons and Words of Wisdom to Help You along the Way
- Seven Short Stories and Eight Poems
- Dr. King's Dream and Barack Obama: Yes We Can

- Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama: Presidents Extraordinaire of the World
- Lifting Our Literary Voices: An Anthology of Poetry, Short Stories and Essays
- High Hopes and Challenging Realities: Defeating Racial Problems at Florida International University 1972 – 1982
- First Black Police Chief of Jeffersonville: My Uncle Lawson Burnet

30. Susie Ingram [richleeing@yahoo.com](mailto:richleeing@yahoo.com)

Book:

- God Lives Here Too

31. Donald Irving [acts238\\_us@yahoo.com](mailto:acts238_us@yahoo.com)

32. Rudy Jackson [rdjackson2@comcast.net](mailto:rdjackson2@comcast.net) [aplus-computers.com](http://aplus-computers.com)

33. Lisa James [lisajames1166@gmail.com](mailto:lisajames1166@gmail.com)

34. Esther Johnson [queenestherj@att.net](mailto:queenestherj@att.net)

35. Lateresa Jones [lajonesusa@gmail.com](mailto:lajonesusa@gmail.com)

36. Willie LeLand [rhodessia@aol.com](mailto:rhodessia@aol.com)

37. Lyra Brizzard Logan [lyra@webmaster-e.net](mailto:lyra@webmaster-e.net)

Book:

- Learn to Program with App Inventor

38. Dr. Willie Logan [logan@olcdc.org](mailto:logan@olcdc.org)

39. Emma Martin [emmalemartin777@gmail.com](mailto:emmalemartin777@gmail.com)

Book:

- I Cried Out and He Heard Me

40. Audrey Moss [mossr1971@yahoo.com](mailto:mossr1971@yahoo.com)

41. George Moss [george@GMOSSDESIGN.COM](mailto:george@GMOSSDESIGN.COM) [www.gmossdesign.com](http://www.gmossdesign.com)

Book:

- The Chronicles of Ann & Lo

42. Rev. Robert Moss [mossr1971@yahoo.com](mailto:mossr1971@yahoo.com)
43. Rudy Murray, Jr. None
44. Lillie Q. Odom [oneabeba@gmail.com](mailto:oneabeba@gmail.com)
45. Dr. Kitty Oliver [oliverko@aol.com](mailto:oliverko@aol.com) [www.kittyoliveronline.com](http://www.kittyoliveronline.com)  
 Books:
- Multicolored Memories of a Black Southern Girl (University Press of Kentucky)
  - Voices of America: Race and Change in Hollywood Florida (Arcadia Press)
  - Multicultural Reflections on Race and Change (Bordighera Press)
46. Angela Thomas Peterson [freeanntp@yahoo.com](mailto:freeanntp@yahoo.com)  
 Books:
- This Too Shall Pass (Christian)
  - Through the Eyes of God... Poetic Messages of Hope (Poetry)
  - I'm Not a Giant, I'm Just a Big Kid! (Children's anti-bullying book)
47. Dr. Anne S. Pruitt-Logan [annepruitt19@msn.com](mailto:annepruitt19@msn.com) [www.lucydiggsslowe.com](http://www.lucydiggsslowe.com)  
 Book:
- Faithful to the Task at Hand: The Life of Lucy Diggs Slowe
48. Patricia Reid-Waugh [preidwaugh@yahoo.com](mailto:preidwaugh@yahoo.com) [www.reidwaughbooks.com](http://www.reidwaughbooks.com)  
 Book:
- Retirement, A New Adventure
49. Sharon Ritchie-Brown [srbrown6176@gmail.com](mailto:srbrown6176@gmail.com)  
 Book:
- Retribution of Madness
50. Dr. Indiana Robinson [inyaso@hotmail.com](mailto:inyaso@hotmail.com)  
 Books:
- Pioneers: First and Second Book of Proverbs and Social Commentary in and of Songs
  - The ABCs of APA: An Incoming Student Inspiration Guide
  - Confronting Escapism: Retreating Back to Reality
51. Stephanie Cottingham Rodriguez [scottingham88@gmail.com](mailto:scottingham88@gmail.com)



52. Kyrie R. Samuel [gracecos1@gmail.com](mailto:gracecos1@gmail.com)  
Book:  
  - Kyrie Love Grandma Soooo Much
53. George Simpson [georgeasimpsonjr@mail.com](mailto:georgeasimpsonjr@mail.com)
54. Dr. Delores M. Smiley [mixsmi45@bellsouth.net](mailto:mixsmi45@bellsouth.net) [smileypresentations.com](http://smileypresentations.com)  
Books:  
  - The Harvest: Keeping it Real
  - The Journey: From the Garden of Eden to the Promised Land
55. Dearta Smith [dcstherapy@gmail.com](mailto:dcstherapy@gmail.com) [www.deartasmith.com](http://www.deartasmith.com)  
Books:  
  - Will You Read With Me?
  - A Snack for Samuel
  - I looked in the Mirror
56. Aliya Stanford [ananda0601@bellsouth.net](mailto:ananda0601@bellsouth.net)  
Book:  
  - Princess So'la, In My World
57. Dr. Rose Stiffin [rstiffin@FMUNIV.EDU](mailto:rstiffin@FMUNIV.EDU)  
Books:  
  - Casino Blues
  - Groovin' on a Half Shell
  - A Winter Friend
58. Rhodesia Strong [rhodesia@aol.com](mailto:rhodesia@aol.com)
59. Clarice Tanelus [cptanelus@hotmail.com](mailto:cptanelus@hotmail.com)
60. Rev. Abraham J. Thomas [athoma43@bellsouth.net](mailto:athoma43@bellsouth.net)  
Books:  
  - Gilbert Lawrence Porter, Ph.D.
  - Everybody Loves Skeeter
  - The Heat Man

61. Arnetha A. Thomas                      [arnethathomas@aol.com](mailto:arnethathomas@aol.com)  
Book:  
  - Get Through, Going Through Life
62. Dr. Thea Long White                      [theawhite8910@gmail.com](mailto:theawhite8910@gmail.com)  
Book:  
  - Sprouting into Success
63. Ella Williams                              [smeinc@hotmail.com](mailto:smeinc@hotmail.com)
64. Dr. James R. Williams                      [doctorjrw4@gmail.com](mailto:doctorjrw4@gmail.com)  
Book:  
  - To God be the Glory
65. Nikisha Williams                              [nikisha@omiokunbooks.com](mailto:nikisha@omiokunbooks.com)
66. Tameka Williams-Walker                      [williamseducationfl@gmail.com](mailto:williamseducationfl@gmail.com) [www.williamseducationfl.org](http://www.williamseducationfl.org)  
Books:  
  - 10 Questions to Help You Find That Amazing Partner
  - Take Back Your Life: How to Triumph through Adversity
67. Virginia Williams                              [vwilliams53@bellsouth.net](mailto:vwilliams53@bellsouth.net)
68. Asiah Wolfolk-Manning                      [asiahunlimited@gmail.com](mailto:asiahunlimited@gmail.com) [www.asiahunlimited.com](http://www.asiahunlimited.com)  
Books:  
  - Unlimit Yourself
  - Be Empowered: A to Z
  - Teen Motivation 101: Ten Secrets of High School Success

## **“The Legacy of Books**

**As humans, we die, but books live on forever,**

**Culturally and Intellectually,**

**Enriching the lives of Future Generations.**

**--- Ralph Hogges”**

**([www.ralphhogges.com](http://www.ralphhogges.com))**

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