



Carter G. Woodson Book Awards, 2024

The Carter G. Woodson Award is a testament to the everlasting legacy of Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson, an author, historian, and educator, often regarded as the father of Black History Month. This distinguished award, established in 1974, celebrates nonfiction and informational trade books that encapsulate the rich cultural experience of ethnic groups within the United States. Tailored for elementary, middle, and high school-aged students, these books offer a compelling journey through the diverse perspectives that have shaped our nation's history. In honoring Woodson's commitment to highlighting underrepresented voices, the recipients of this award play a vital role in fostering understanding, appreciation, and awareness among young readers.

—Sydney G. Beauchamp, Chair
Carter G. Woodson Book Award Committee

Elementary Winner

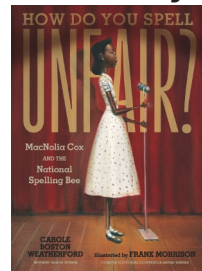


My Powerful Hair, by Carole Lindstrom, illustrated by Steph Littlebird. Abrams Books for Young Readers. Reviewed by Kristy A. Brugar, Professor, Social Studies Education at University of Oklahoma.

My Powerful Hair explores family history, identity, and expression through a celebration of hair. The story is told from the perspective of a young girl who wants to grow her hair long. As she experiences significant life events, she notes the length of her hair. For example, when her brother is born, her hair touches her shoulders. Carole Lindstrom (Turtle Mountain Band of Ojibwe) provides powerful words to share the significance of hair for Indigenous cultures and in three generations of her family. She writes, "Our ancestors say: Our hair is our memories. Our source of strength. An extension of us." Lindstrom's words are complemented by artist Steph Littlebird's (Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde) unique illustrations. Back matter includes information about Lindstrom's family history, the impact of Indian boarding schools, and an Ojibwe glossary.

Social Studies Themes: ● CULTURE; ● PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS; ● INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY.

Elementary Honor Book



How Do You Spell Unfair? MacNolia Cox and the National Spelling Bee, by Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Frank Morrison. Candlewick. Reviewed by Ann Adkins, Fifth Grade Teacher, St. Pius X/St. Leo School, Omaha, Nebraska

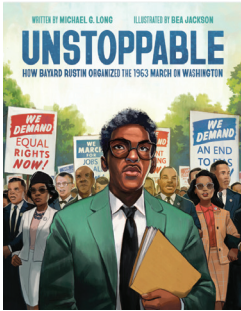
How Do You Spell Unfair? introduces readers to Akron, Ohio eighth grader MacNolia Cox, the first African American to win her city's spelling bee and qualify to participate in the 1936 National Spelling Bee. Despite the accolades she received in her hometown, MacNolia encountered a different world on her way to the national bee—one filled with discriminatory practices. MacNolia and the only other Black participant had to enter the spelling bee through a separate door and, once there, were required to sit at a table apart from the other contestants. Though MacNolia did not win the spelling bee, she made it to the finals. Her eventual elimination was not without controversy. Some claimed she was given an invalid word—the judges saw things otherwise.

Weatherford uses a clever spelling theme to tell MacNolia's story. Morrison's bold illustrations give readers both a sense of

MacNolia's jubilation and the reality of the challenges she faced.

Social Studies Themes: ① CULTURE; ② TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; ③ INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY.

Elementary Honor Book



Unstoppable: How Bayard Rustin Organized the 1963 March on Washington, by Michael G. Long, illustrated by Bea Jackson. Little Bee Books. Reviewed by Valencia Abbott, History Teacher, Rockingham Early College High School, Wentworth, North Carolina.

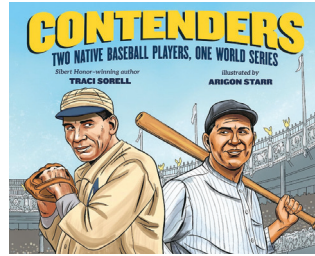
Unstoppable is the perfect adjective to describe a turning point with the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963—that realization, at a certain moment, that there was no going back. And that is also the precise adjective to describe Bayard Rustin. Today, Rustin's narrative is becoming more known as his story makes its way into more books and even a film. Author Michael Long, with this picture book, has worked to capture Rustin's life and legacy, notably his architectural role in organizing the historic March on Washington, where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his iconic "I Have a Dream" speech. With glowing artistry, Bea Jackson helps portray Rustin's resilience. Despite facing discrimination as an openly gay African American man, he remained dedicated to the pursuit of justice for all marginalized communities. His commitment to nonviolent protest and civil disobedience left an indelible mark on the civil rights movement, influencing activists' strategies for years to come.

Social Studies Themes: ① CULTURE; ③ PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS; ④ INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY; ⑤ INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS

Middle Level Winner

Contenders: Two Native Baseball Players, One World Series, by Traci Sorell, illustrated by Arigon Starr. Kokila (Penguin Random House). Reviewed by Jennifer Welch, High School History Teacher,

Passaic Academy for Science and Engineering, Passaic, New Jersey.



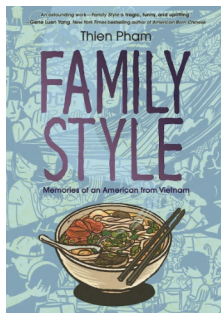
Contenders opens on a ballfield at the 1911 World Series, depicting the first time two Native American players opposed one another in a major league championship game. The book then returns to the childhood of the two players, Charles Albert Bender (Ojibwe) and John Tortes Meyers (Cahuilla). Bender spent time at residential schools formed by the federal government and Meyers grew up on a reservation in California. As boys and young men both had a passion for baseball, which eventually led them to meet in the major leagues. The book not only highlights their notable skill (the Author's Note states that Bender reportedly invented the slider) but also describes the prejudice the men endured at the hands of fans, sportswriters, and other players.

Readers don't need a deep understanding of baseball, but for those who are sports fans, the depiction of the World Series is a delight, and the brief appearances of college football coach Pop Warner (who coached at the first Native American boarding school) and baseball catcher and team owner Connie Mack are a fun surprise. The book concludes by highlighting other Native players in Major League Baseball. This 36-page picture book can prompt students to consider the many ways race impacts individual lives and our culture more generally.

Social Studies Themes: ① CULTURE; ② TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; ⑥ INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS.

Secondary Winner

Family Style: Memories of an American from Vietnam, by Thien Pham. First Second, an imprint of Roaring Brook Press. Reviewed by Elizabeth Sturm, Associate Professor, Department of Education, Lewis University, Romeoville, Illinois. In this graphic memoir, Thien Pham chronicles his childhood starting with his family fleeing Vietnam on a ship carrying refugees to Thailand. He relates his first memory of the briny taste of the seawater and the salty sweetness of a rice ball eaten



during the long, dangerous voyage. These memories are juxtaposed with flashes of the dangers and trauma the family faced. While the dangers were significant, Pham’s memories center on the security provided by his parents and their continued reassurance that everything would be okay.

Food and family are continuing themes as Pham recounts his family’s life in a refugee camp. He recalls both sweet and savory memories growing up, such as the salty goodness of a potato chip shared during a street game and the sweetness of strawberries after his parents spent hours working in the fields. Food also serves as a metaphor for identity. When in the camp, his mother purchases a Bánh Cuốn (Vietnamese rice rolls) stall to

provide for the family. Pham describes the process of making the rolls and how his mother labored to create the food that she said “tastes like home.”

Later, after immigrating to America, the family purchases a bakery and learns to make croissants, moving away from Vietnamese food. Pham wrestles with his identity, including discovering Dairy Queen Blizzards, and wondering if he was still “Vietnamese enough.” The memoir ends with Pham, now an adult, deciding to earn his citizenship. *Family Style* is a graphic memoir that can appeal to any young adult reader. While many students have not experienced being a refugee, they can identify with the themes of family and identity formation, and of course food.

Social Studies Themes: ❶ CULTURE; ❷ TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; ❸ INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY; ❹ INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS; ❺ CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES.

Septima P. Clark Women in Literature Book Award, 2024



The Septima Clark Women in Literature Award, established in 2019, is named in honor of Septima Poinsette Clark, whose contributions to education and the civil rights movement left an indelible mark. The award is dedicated to recognizing outstanding nonfiction or informational trade books tailored for elementary, middle, and high school-aged readers that highlight the stories, perspectives, and accomplishments of women. Each year, the award committee selects high-quality books that embody originality and are well-crafted, untold stories.

Celebrating the diversity of experience, this year’s selected books illuminate women who overcame challenges, were trailblazers, and contributed to the broader narrative of social justice. The winning books came from different geographical locations, cultures, and historical time periods.

–Sydney G. Beauchamp, Chair
Septima Clark Women in Literature
BookAward Committee