

Telling Stories: Carole Boston Weatherford

Friday, October 31, 2008

Grades 4-6

11 a.m.-12 p.m. ET



Carole Boston Weatherford

When viewing *Telling Stories: Carole Boston Weatherford* and participating in this guide's suggested activities, the following language arts standards sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association will be addressed: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11. 

A Born Writer

Carole Boston Weatherford became a published poet in the first grade when her mother transcribed what Carole dictated. Her father, a high school printing teacher, then 'published' a limited edition of the poem. And Carole Boston Weatherford hasn't stopped writing since.

From the publication of *Juneteenth Jamboree* (Lee & Low) in 1995, Carole's books have received many awards and much recognition. Her work has been included on Bank Street College of Education Best Books, Capitol Choices, IRA/CBC Teachers Choices, and the NCSS Notable Trade Books in the Social Studies, among others. *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom* (Hyperion), illustrated by Kadir Nelson, was named a Caldecott Honor book, won the Coretta Scott King Award for Illustration, and received the NAACP Image Award.

Born and raised in Baltimore, Carole now lives in North Carolina with her family where she teaches at Fayetteville State University. Carole holds a Master of Arts degree in publication design from the University of Baltimore and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of North Carolina-Greensboro.

Tough Topics Tackled

Carole Boston Weatherford writes about difficult topics such as slavery, segregation, and prejudice. These tough themes become accessible to young readers in the hands of this accomplished and creative writer.

The context in which Billie Holiday lived and sang becomes tangible and personal in *Becoming Billie Holiday* (Wordsong). Readers come to know the young John Coltrane who confronted huge obstacles before becoming a well-known jazz musician in *Before John Was a Jazz Giant* (Holt). They reach the North Pole and achieve a sense of pride with *I, Matthew Henson* (Walker). Readers will witness firsthand the Sixteenth Street Church bombing in *Birmingham, 1963* (Wordsong).

These and all of Carole's books — even those for younger children — combine the brevity, power, and freshness of poetry with the impact of historical events revisited.

About the Program

Carole Boston Weatherford will talk about her work in a discussion moderated by Maria Salvadore, a professor of children's literature. In addition to discussing her highly acclaimed book *Moses*, Weatherford will discuss ways in which poetry and history intersect, how she identifies and researches her topics, and her recent work, including *Becoming Billie Holiday*.



Carole Boston Weatherford ART BY FLOYD COOPER

Jacket art is by Floyd Cooper
Jacket design is by Helen Robinson

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Instructional Activities

Reading

Read *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom*. Discuss how the illustrations enhance the text. From whose perspectives is Harriet Tubman revealed? How do the different voices create character? What other techniques are used to denote different points of view?

Research/History

Find out more about the events that led up to the bombing described in *Birmingham 1963*. What factors precipitated this horrific event? What changed after the bombing and the children's deaths? Create a timeline of significant events and changes in the law, beginning ten (10) years prior to 1963, and ending ten (10) years later.

Writing/Music

After reading Weatherford's books on John Coltrane and Billie Holiday, locate recordings of their music. As you listen to the music of these jazz greats, call to mind an incident (real or imagined) from your life that the music evokes. Write about it. What colors does the music bring to mind? Why? How does it make you feel?

Internet Resources

For more information, connect to: caroleweatherford.com/welcome.html

Find out more about the author and get suggested lesson plans related to specific books. pbs.org/jazz/biography/

Learn more about Billie Holiday, John Coltrane, and others and hear their music.

lib.washington.edu/subject/History/tm/black.html

Link to other Web sites to learn more about African American history.

news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/01/0110_030113_henson.html

See photographs of Matthew Henson on his expedition to the North Pole.

Select Books by Carole Boston Weatherford

Becoming Billie Holiday (Wordsong, 2008).

Before John Was a Jazz Giant: A Song of John Coltrane, illustrated by Sean Qualls (Holt, 2007).

Birmingham, 1963 (Wordsong, 2007).

Champions on the Beach: The 1955 Cannon Street YMCA All-Stars, illustrated by Leonard Jenkins (Dial, 2007).

Dear Mr. Rosenwald, illustrated by R. Gregory Christie (Scholastic, 2006).

I, Matthew Henson, illustrated by Eric Velasquez (Walker, 2008).

Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom, illustrated by Kadir Nelson (Hyperion, 2006).

Remember the Bridge: Poems of a People (Philomel, 2002).

