

## **RESOLUTION**

### **Honoring the African American Children's Book Project on the Occasion of its 29th Annual African American Children's Book Fair.**

WHEREAS, Philadelphia struggles with a double-digit illiteracy rate among those 16 and older, underscoring the importance of providing children with early opportunities to learn to read, and beyond that, to develop a love for reading; and

WHEREAS, Studies show that children who read outside of school coursework tend to excel in other aspects of their lives. Book Fairs provide children with a venue to explore their curiosity and interests, and motivates children to read by offering them a wide selection of different books to browse; and

WHEREAS, The African American Children's Book Fair is one of the oldest and largest single day events for African American children's books in the country, with an average annual attendance of over 3,500 children, caregivers, and educators. Rich or poor, no one leaves empty handed, as the books themselves are priced at a level where they are more affordable, and posters, bookmarkers, and raffle books are distributed free of charge to attendees; and

WHEREAS, The Book Fair highlights books that enlighten and empower children, and features some of the most exciting children's authors from the multicultural literary community. Its goal is not merely to get children reading, but to foster in them a lifelong passion for the activity that enriches their lives. The event is a product of the African American Children's Book Project; and

WHEREAS, Vanesse Lloyd-Sgambati is the founder and CEO of the African American Children's Book Project. She created the African American Children's Book Project to preserve and promote youth literature written and illustrators about African American. As a literary consultant, she is a much sought-after expert on trends in diverse books and how to incorporate these books into homes, schools and libraries. She created the Book Fair because she believes that all children should have access to books that reflect their images. With the Book Fair in its 29th year, it is clear that Lloyd-Sgambati's vision continues to resonate within the Philadelphia community; and

WHEREAS, Each year to kick-off Black History Month, the African American Children's Book Project honors people in the community who open the pages of book and keep the literary flames ablaze in not only Philadelphia, but across the country; and

WHEREAS, This annual event is held at the height of winter - ice storms, snow, rain and cold have never hindered this program. The show has gone forward to meet the literary needs of the community since 1992. Therefore, in light of the national Covid-19 pandemic, the event will be held virtually to attract more participants nationally.

WHEREAS, During the course of the 2020 calendar year, parents, caregivers and educators have reached out to the organizers and expressed appreciation for the Children's Book Fair. Additionally, parents shared, in this world of remote learning, the children turned to their home

libraries created from attending the Children's Book Fair to get a reprieve from electronics. Thus, fueling the organizers to return with splendor and fanfare to hold the mega event in 2021.

WHEREAS, This year's Book Fair will highlight individuals who have made contributions to Literacy; this year they will honor authors Andrea Davis Pinkney, Carol Boston Weatherford, illustrator Brian Pinkney, and community literacy supporter Shonda McClain.

WHEREAS, Andrea Davis Pinkney is the New York Times bestselling award-winning author of numerous books for children and young adults. Her work has received multiple Coretta Scott King Book Award citations. She is a four-time nominee for the NAACP Image Award, and has been inducted into the New York State Writers Hall of Fame. Ms. Pinkney is the recipient of both the Regina Medal and the Arbuthnot Honor Award for her distinguished and singular contribution to the field of children's literature. She has been named one of the "25 Most Influential People in our Children's Lives" by Children's Health magazine, and is listed among the "25 Most Influential Black Women in Business" by The Network Journal.

WHEREAS, Carole Boston Weatherford, is hailed by *Huffington Post* as a "master of picture book nonfiction." Carole is a Newbery Honor author, *New York Times* best-seller and two-time NAACP Image Award winner. She is the author of *Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre*, has over 50 books, including three Caldecott Honor winners: *Freedom in Congo Square*, *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer*, and *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom*. Her recent releases include *UNSPEAKABLE: The Tulsa Race Massacre*; *BOX: Henry Brown Mails Himself to Freedom*; *By and By: Charles A. Tindley, The Father of Gospel Music*; *R-E-S-P-E-C-T: Aretha Franklin, The Queen of Soul*; and *The Roots of Rap: 16 Bars on the 4 Pillars of Hip Hop*. A native of Baltimore, she teaches at Fayetteville State University in North Carolina. Carole has recently been recognized with the 2021 American Library Association for her outstanding literary work entitled *BOX*.

WHEREAS, Brian Pinkney has been awarded the Coretta Scott King Honor Award for illustration on three occasions, and the Coretta Scott King medal for *In the Time of the Drums* by Kim Siegelson. He is a five-time NAACP Image Award nominee, the recipient of many American Library Association Notable Book citations and was acknowledged by National Council for Teachers of English for his vast contribution to the field of children's literature. Brian's recent illustrated books include *Martin Rising: Requiem for a King* by Andrea Davis Pinkney. Additional recent works include *In Your Hands* by Carole Boston Weatherford, and *Let's Clap, Jump, Sing, and Shout* by Patricia C. McKissack. As a fine artist, Brian's paintings are exhibited vastly in museums and select gallery showings and are also part of many distinguished private collections. Brian was named among the "25 Most Influential People in our Children's Lives" by Children's Health magazine. He has served on the faculty in the Master's Degree of Illustration department at the School of Visual Arts. He is a former chairperson for the Society of Illustrators Original Art Show.

WHEREAS, Shonda McClain is the Senior Internal Communications Specialist at AmeriHealth Caritas, a leading national Medicaid/Medicare provider that works to empower those in need,

especially the underserved and disabled. Before joining AmeriHealth Caritas in 2018, Shonda was the editor of the Tribune Magazine, a publication that addresses topics of interest and importance to the African American community, and editor of Sojourner, a quarterly African American visitors guide to Philadelphia. Both are products of The Philadelphia Tribune, the nation's oldest continuously published newspaper, which has served the African American community since 1884. Shonda enjoys mentoring young women and giving back to her community. Today, she serves as a proud board member of Teenshop, Inc., which nurtures "girls with goals," She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and the National Association of Black Journalists. Shonda has been recognized for her work by the National Newspaper Publishers Association for journalism excellence – winning first prize for her Lifestyles, Entertainment and Learning Key sections. She was a 2018 WDAS Women of Excellence honoree, one of Kappa Alpha Psi's African American Women Achievers and was honored by Teenshop, Inc. for her work in media. Shonda grew up in Indianapolis, Ind. She attended Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., where she earned a bachelor's degree in journalism and was inducted into Kappa Tau Alpha, the national journalism honor society.

WHEREAS, The 2021 African American Children's Book Fair will take place on Saturday, February 6 and will be held virtually, from 11AM to 4 PM. This year's event will be hosted by African American Children's Book Project (AACBP); and

WHEREAS, Council has no doubt that this year's iteration of the Book Fair will meet all the lofty expectations inspired by its history of excellence. We encourage all of our City's residents, young and old alike, to discover, for the first time or once again, the wonders to be found in the pages of a good book; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby honor the African American Children's Book Project on the Occasion of its 29th Annual African American Children's Book Fair.

**Katherine Gilmore Richardson**

**Councilmember At-Large**

**January 28, 2021**

**Co-Sponsors:** Councilmember Derek Green, Councilmember Kenyatta Johnson