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Leaders for Change: Picture Book Biographies

Carter Reads the Newspaper

Deborah Hopkinson (J BIO Woodson) 2019

Carter G. Woodson was born ten years after the end of the Civil War, to parents who had both been enslaved. Their stories were not the ones written about in history books, but Carter learned them and kept them in his heart.

Counting on Katherine: how Katherine Johnson saved Apollo 13

Helaine Becker (J BIO Johnson) 2018

From Katherine's early beginnings as a gifted student to her heroic accomplishments as a prominent mathematician at NASA, this is the story of a groundbreaking American woman who not only calculated the course of moon landings but, in turn, saved lives and made enormous contributions to history.

Feed Your Mind: a story of August Wilson

Jen Bryant (J BIO Wilson) 2019

August Wilson (1945-2005) was a two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright who had a particular talent for capturing the authentic, everyday voice of Black Americans. As a child, he read off soup cans and cereal boxes, and when his mother brought him to the library, his whole world opened up. After facing intense prejudice at school from both students and some teachers, August dropped out. However, he continued reading and educating himself independently. He felt that if he could read about it, then he could teach himself anything and accomplish anything.

Jake Makes a World: Jacob Lawrence, a Young Artist in Harlem

Sharifa Rhodes-Pitts (J BIO Lawrence) 2015

Follows the creative adventures of the young Jacob Lawrence as he finds inspiration in the vibrant colors and characters of his community in Harlem.

Mahalia Jackson: Walking with Kings and Queens

Nina Nolan (J BIO Jackson) 2015

A picture-book introduction to the gospel singer's life and career.

Pies from Nowhere: How Georgia Gilmore Sustained the Montgomery Bus Boycott

Dee Romito (J BIO Gilmore) 2018

Georgia Gilmore was a cook at the National Lunch Company in Montgomery, Alabama. When the bus boycotts broke out in Montgomery after Rosa Parks was arrested, Georgia organized a group of women who cooked and baked to fund-raise for gas and cars to help sustain the boycott. This picture book highlights a hidden figure of the Civil Rights Movement who fueled the bus boycotts and demonstrated that one person can make a real change in her community and beyond



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Rise! From Caged Bird to Poet of the People, Maya Angelou

Bethany Hegedus (J BIO Angelou) 2019

A biography of African American writer, performer, and activist Maya Angelou, who turned a childhood of trauma and emotional pain to become one of the most inspiring voices of our lifetime.

Sisters & Champions

Howard Bryant (J BIO Williams) 2018

An inspiring picture book sports biography about two of the greatest female tennis players of all-time, outsiders who just happen to be sisters.

A Voice Named Aretha

Katheryn Russell-Brown (J BIO Franklin) 2020

In this stirring biography of a true artistic and social icon, young readers learn how Aretha's talent, intelligence, and perseverance made her a star who will shine on for generations to come.

What Do You Do with a Voice Like That? The Story of Extraordinary Congresswoman Barbara Jordan

Chris Barton (J BIO Jordan) 2018

Congresswoman Barbara Jordan had a big, bold, confident voice—and she knew how to use it! Learn all about her amazing career in this illuminating and inspiring picture book biography of the lawyer, educator, politician, and civil rights leader.