HICKORY
COMMUNITY THEATRE

BEHIND / BEYOND
THE SCENES / THE STAGE

Audience Enlightenment Guide

Director's Notes by Dr. Corlis Hayes

Tori Sampson gives us four great characters, three black and one white, all with different points of view on race, gender relations, but all the same objections for equality of women of color. *Cadillac Crew* reclaims the stories of forgotten women who blazed the trail for desegregation and women's rights.

This story is historical fiction inspired by real events and people. Some key women mentioned in this play are Rosa Parks, Shirley Chisholm and Dr. Dorothy Height.

Sampson's story is essential now due to the world's political climate toward the Black community. Black women continuously move the movement forward and are the key to the change, yet their stories get lost. Black women s stories matter and should be told. *Cadillac Crew* gives them this chance to have part of their story told.

The playwright introduces the story of Abby, Dee, Rachel and Sarah who strive for Black women's equal rights on the eve of Rosa Parks' speech. These four civil rights activists gather to share and maintain the Black women's narrative in this historical moment. They work on these key goals by gathering communities to raise sexual assault warnings and registering Black voters.

This is a transcendent story, especially to youth groups as they will be able to show what they have learned today to the new generation to come.

Black Lives Matter

Women's Lives Matter

All Lives Matter

Historical Information to Note:

This play was inspired by Dr. Dorothy Height who was an African American civil rights and women's rights activist. She focused on issues of African American women, including unemployment, illiteracy, and voter awareness.

A leader of the Civil Rights Movement, Dr. Height served as President of The National Council of Negro Women for 40 years.

Dr. Height was the only woman to serve regularly alongside of the "Big Six" on major civil rights projects. Although she was not featured as a speaker during the March on Washington in 1963, she was one of the event's chief organizers and represented the only women's organization recognized in The March.

Finally, I want to thank The Hickory Community Theatre for giving me the opportunity to use this play as a platform for social change and promote social justice among women of color.

Dr. Corlis Hayes is excited to make her directing debut at The Hickory Community Theatre with the powerful drama *Cadillac Crew* by Tori Sampson. She is a member of the faculty in the Division of Arts and Communication at Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) in Charlotte, NC. Most recently she has joined the faculty of a nonprofit called The Theatre Gap that helps students use a gap year to prepare for auditions to get into BFA programs under the leadership of Corey Mitchell. She has served as Chair of The Theatre Department at Morgan State University and Livingstone College, as well as headed Johnson C. Smith University Drama Program.

Her (CPCC) directing credits include: *The Miracle Worker, The Piano Lesson, Fences, Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*. Dr. Hayes has directed shows for several local theatre companies in Charlotte such as *King Liz* for Three Bone Theatre, *Top Dog/Under Dog* for Shakespeare Carolina and *Twilight: Los Angeles* for On Q Productions. Her work has received numerous awards, the most recent all being for plays by August Wilson, all produced by Brand New Sheriff Productions in Charlotte. These include Best Play and Director from The Metrolina Theatre Association (MTA) for Best Play and Director for *Two Trains Running* in 2019, *Fences* in 2020, and *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* in 2022.

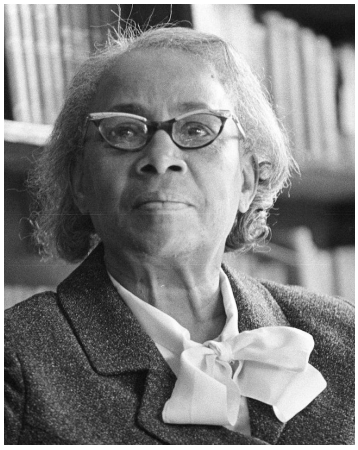
Meet the Unsung Women Leaders From the Civil Rights Movement

Towering figures like Martin Luther King Jr., W.E.B. Du Bois and Thurgood Marshall tend to dominate the story of the struggle for Civil rights in America.

Only more recently have women like Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth and Rosa Parks begun to share the spotlight more equally. But that still leaves scores of unsung female heroes who played a significant role in the movement for racial equality. In the words of Jo Ann Robinson, "Women's leadership was no less important to the development of the Montgomery Bus Boycott than was the male and minister-dominated leadership. "

Here's a look back a few of these incredible women.

Septima Poinsette Clark (1898-1987)



A pioneer in grassroots citizenship education, Septima Clark was called the "Mother of the Movement" and the epitome of a "community teacher, intuitive fighter for human rights and leader of her unlettered and disillusioned people" (McFadden, "Septima Clark," 85; King, July 1962).

The daughter of a laundrywoman and a former slave, Clark was born 3 May 1898 in Charleston, South Carolina. In 1916 she graduated from secondary school and, after passing her teacher's exam, taught at a black school on Johns Island, just outside of Charleston. For more than 30 years, she taught throughout South Carolina, including 18 years in Columbia and 9 in Charleston.

Clark pursued her education during summer breaks. In 1937 Clark studied under W. E. B. Du Bois at Atlanta University before eventually earning her BA (1942) from Benedict College in Columbia, and her MA (1946) from Virginia's Hampton Institute. Clark also worked with the YWCA and participated in a class action lawsuit filed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) that led to pay equity for Black and White teachers in South Carolina. In 1956 South Carolina passed a statute that prohibited city and state employees from belonging to civil rights organizations. After 40 years of teaching, Clark's employment contract was not renewed when she refused to resign from the NAACP.

By the time of her firing in 1956, Clark had already begun to conduct workshops during her summer vacations at the Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tennessee, a grassroots education center dedicated to social justice. Rosa Parks participated in one of Clark's workshops just months before she helped launch the Montgomery bus boycott. After losing her teaching position, Myles Horton hired Clark full time as Highlander's director of workshops. Believing that literacy and political empowerment are inextricably linked, Clark taught people basic literacy skills, their rights and duties as U.S. citizens, and how to fill out voter registration forms.

When the state of Tennessee forced Highlander to close in 1961, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) established the Citizenship Education Program (CEP), modeled on Clark's citizenship workshops. Clark became SCLC's director of education and teaching, conducting teacher training and developing curricula. King appreciated Clark's "expert direction" of the CEP, which he called "the bulwark of SCLC's program department" (King, 11 August 1965). Although Clark found that most men at SCLC "didn't respect women too much," she thought that King "really felt that black women had a place in the movement" (Clark, 25 July 1976; McFadden, "Septima Clark," 93).

After retiring from SCLC in 1970, Clark conducted workshops for the American Field Service. In 1975 she was elected to the Charleston, South Carolina, School Board. The following year, the governor of South Carolina reinstated her teacher's pension after declaring that she had been unjustly terminated in 1956. She was given a Living Legacy Award by President Jimmy Carter in 1979 and published her second memoir, *Ready from Within*, in 1986.

Ella Baker (1903-1986)

Though highly respected, Baker was a force outside the spotlight, mentoring and supporting Dubois, Marshall and King. She built her reputation as a movement builder, rather than as an outsized star, to the point that Baker was given the nickname "Fundi" — a Swahili word for someone who teaches the next generation.

Ella Jo Baker was born on December 13, 1903, in Norfolk, Virginia. Growing up in North Carolina, she developed a sense for social justice early on, due in part to her grandmother's stories about life under slavery. As a slave, her grandmother had been whipped for refusing to marry a man chosen for her by the slave owner. Her grandmother's pride and resilience in the face of racism and injustice continued to inspire Baker throughout her life.

Baker studied at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. After graduating in 1927 as class valedictorian, she moved to New York City and in 1930 joined the Young Negroes Cooperative League, whose purpose was to develop Black economic power through collective planning. She also involved herself with several women's organizations. She was committed to economic justice for all people and once said, "People cannot be free until there is enough work in this land to give everybody a job."

Baker began her involvement with the NAACP in 1940. She worked as a field secretary and then served as director of branches from 1943 until 1946. Inspired by the historic bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955, Baker co-founded the organization In Friendship to raise money to fight against Jim Crow Laws in the deep South. In 1957, she moved to Atlanta to help organize Martin Luther King, Jr.'s new organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).

Baker left the SCLC after the Greensboro sit-ins. She wanted to assist the new student activists because she viewed young, emerging activists as a resource and an asset to the movement. Baker organized a meeting at Shaw University for the student leaders of the sit-ins in April 1960. From that meeting, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was born. SNCC members joined with activists from the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) to organize the 1961 Freedom Rides. In 1964 SNCC helped create Freedom Summer, an effort to focus national attention on Mississippi's racism and to register black voters. That same year, Baker helped organize the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) as an alternative to the all-white Mississippi Democratic Party.

In 1967 Baker returned to New York City, where she continued her activism. She later collaborated with Arthur Kinoy and others to form the Mass Party Organizing Committee, a socialist organization. In 1972 she traveled the country in support of the "Free Angela" campaign, demanding the release of activist and writer Angela Davis, who had been imprisoned on charges of kidnapping and murder in the Marin County Civic Center attacks. Davis was eventually acquitted.

Baker also supported the Puerto Rican independence movement and spoke out against apartheid in South Africa. She allied with a number of women's groups, including the Third World Women's Alliance and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. She remained an activist until her death on December 13, 1986, her 83rd birthday.

Daisy Bates (1914-1999)

A newspaper publisher by trade, Bates played a key role in desegregating schools as president of the Arkansas chapter of the NAACP. She was a guiding hand in enrolling nine African American students in an all-white Little Rock high school, setting in motion a journey toward education equality.

Daisy Bates was born in Huttig, Arkansas in 1914 and raised in a foster home. When she was three years old, her mother was killed by three white men. Although Bates, was just a child, her biological mother's death made an emotional and mental imprint on her. The unfortunate death forced Bates to confront racism at an early age and pushed her to dedicate her life to ending racial injustice. When she was fifteen, she met her future husband and began travelling with him throughout the South. The couple settled in Little Rock, Arkansas and started their own newspaper. The Arkansas Weekly was one of the only African American newspapers solely dedicated to the Civil

rights Movement. The paper was circulated statewide. Bates not only worked as an editor, but also regularly contributed articles.

Naturally, Bates also worked with local Civil rights organizations. For many years, she served as the President of the Arkansas chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Her work with the NAACP not only transformed the Civil rights Movement but it also made Bates a household name.

After the Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. The Board of Education*, Bates began gathering African American students to enroll at all-white schools. Often the white schools refused to let black students attend. Bates used her newspaper to publicize the schools who did follow the federal mandate. Despite the continuous rejection from many Arkansas public schools, she pushed forward.

When the national NAACP office started to focus on Arkansas' schools, they looked to Bates to plan the strategy. She took the reins and organized the Little Rock Nine. Bates selected nine students to integrate Central High School in Little Rock in 1957. She regularly drove the students to school and worked tirelessly to ensure they were protected from violent crowds. She also advised the group and even joined the school's parent organization.

After the success of the Little Rock Nine, Bates continued to work on improving the status of African Americans in the South. Her influential work with school integration brought her national recognition. In 1962, she published her memoirs, *The Long Shadow of Little Rock*. Bates was invited to sit on the stage during the program at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963. Due to a last-minute change, Bates was invited to speak at the march.

Bates died on November 4th, 1999. For her work, the state of Arkansas proclaimed the third Monday in February as Daisy Gatson Bates Day. She was posthumously awarded the Medal of Freedom in 1999.

Jo Ann Robinson (1912-1992)

The heroes of 1955's bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama are seemingly well known — except Robinson. She distributed more than 50,000 flyers calling for the boycott after the arrest of Rosa Parks. Her fierce calls for justice and commitment to nonviolent protest helped define the era.

Born on April 17, 1912, in Culloden, Georgia, Robinson distinguished herself early as the valedictorian of her high school class, went on to become the first person in her family to graduate from college, and then fulfilled her dream of becoming a teacher.

She taught in the Macon, Georgia, public schools for fives years while earning a master's degree from Atlanta University. She also pursued English studies at Columbia University in New York City. She moved to Montgomery in 1949 to teach at Alabama State College.

In Montgomery, she became active in the Women's Political Council (WPC), a local civic organization for African American professional women that was dedicated to fostering women's involvement in civic affairs, increasing voter registration in the city's black community, and aiding women who were victims of rape or assault.

Soon after arriving in Montgomery, Robinson was verbally attacked by a public bus driver for sitting in the "whites only" section of the bus. When she became the WPC's president the following year, she made desegregating the city's buses one of the organization's top priorities.

The WPC repeatedly complained to the Montgomery city leaders about unfair seating practices and abusive driver conduct. But the group's concerns were dismissed, leading Robinson to begin laying plans for a bus boycott by the city's African American community. Following Rosa Park's arrest in December 1955 for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white person, Robinson and a few associates jumped into action. They copied tens of thousands of leaflets and distributed them across the city, calling for a one-day boycott.

Following the overwhelming success of the one-day boycott, Montgomery's black citizens decided to continue the campaign, establishing the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) to organize the effort and electing Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as the MIA's president.

Robinson chose not to accept an official MIA position

for fear of jeopardizing her job at Alabama State, but she worked behind the scenes as a member of the MIA's executive board, wrote and edited the MIA weekly newsletter, and volunteered in the carpool system that helped African Americans get to and from work. In his memoir of the boycott, *Stride Toward Freedom*, Dr. King said of Robinson, "Apparently indefatigable, she, perhaps more than any other person, was active on every level of the protest."

Despite Robinson's efforts to stay out of the limelight, she was among a group of boycott leaders arrested but never tried. She was also targeted with several acts of intimidation. One local police officer threw a stone through her window, and another poured acid on her car. Eventually, Alabama's governor ordered the state police to guard the homes of Robinson and other boycott leaders.

The boycott continued until December 20, 1956, when the U.S. Supreme Court declared segregated seating on buses unconstitutional.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott was one of the first successful protests of segregation in the Deep South, inspiring other nonviolent civil rights protest. It also established Dr. King as a prominent national figure. Robinson was especially proud of the role that women played in the boycott's success.

Diane Nash (1938 - present)

A member of the Freedom Riders, Nash served as a student leader during the height of the Civil rights Movement, co-founding both the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and the Selma Voting Rights Movement. Her efforts continue to speak to the power of our youth to spur change.

Diane Judith Nash was born on May 15, 1938 in Chicago, Illinois to Leon Nash and Dorothy Bolton Nash. Nash grew up a Roman Catholic and attended parochial and public schools in Chicago. In 1956, she graduated from Hyde Park High School in Chicago, Illinois and began her college career at Howard University in Washington, D.C. before transferring to Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. While she was a student in Nashville, Nash witnessed southern racial segregation for the first time in her life. In 1959, she attended nonviolent protest workshops led by Reverend James Lawson from the Nashville Christian Leadership Conference. Later that year, she protested exclusionary racial policies by participating in impromptu sit-ins at Nashville's downtown lunch counters. Nash was elected chair of the Student Central Committee because of her nonviolent protest philosophy and her reputation from these sit-ins.

By February 13, 1960, the mass sit-ins that began in Greensboro, North Carolina on February 1 had spread to Nashville. Nash organized and led many of the protests which ultimately involved hundreds of black and white area college students. By early April, Nashville mayor Ben West publicly called for the desegregation of Nashville's lunch counters and organized negotiations between Nash and other student leaders and downtown business interests. Because of those negotiations, on May 10, 1960 Nashville, Tennessee became the first southern city to desegregate lunch counters.

Meanwhile Nash and other students from across the South assembled in Raleigh, North Carolina at the urging of NAACP activist Ella Baker. There they founded the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in April 1960.

After the Nashville sit-ins, Nash helped coordinate and participated in the 1961 Freedom Rides across the Deep South. Later that year Nash dropped out of college to become a full-time organizer, strategist, and instructor for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) headed by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Nash married civil rights activist James Bevel in 1961 and moved to Jackson, Mississippi, where she began organizing voter registration and school desegregation campaigns for the SCLC. Arrested dozens of times for their civil rights work in Mississippi and Alabama in the early 1960s, Nash and her husband, James Bevel, received the SCLC's Rosa Parks Award from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1965. Dr. King cited especially their contributions to the Selma Voting Rights Movement that eventually led to the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Throughout the 1960s, she remained involved in political and social transformation. In 1966, Nash joined the Vietnam Antiwar Movement. She spent her career working in real estate and education. She now resides in Chicago and continues to speak out for social change. In July 2022, President Joseph R. Biden awarded Nash the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

In Praise of Dr. Dorothy Height by Nicole Townsend

Dr. Dorothy Irene Height was born on March 10th, 1912 in Richmond, Virginia. She was a leader in the civil rights movement, and some of her life's work included equal rights for African American women, criminal justice reform, and anti-lynching.

Many consider Dr. Height's work to be monumental, and rightfully so. However, the backdrop of her work included political and social conditions, as well as racial narratives that would paint her work as radical. Radical for believing that African Americans deserved to live free from fear with access to academic and economic mobility.

As mentioned earlier, Height was born in Richmond, Virginia during 1912. When she was a young child, her family moved to Rankin, Pennsylvania. In Rankin, schools were racially integrated. This was interesting to learn, because we don't often think of the early 1900s and integrated schools. After some digging, I learned that in 1881, Pennsylvania moved to make it illegal for schools to be segregated. However, they were not closely monitoring this until the federal government started to step in between the 1950s - 70s. Some local governments honored this state law, and some did not.

As a child, Height's mother Fannie was a member of the Pennsylvania Federation of Colored Women, and she would attend meetings with her. We can assume this was the spark that would lead her to life's work. One of her first moments of activism came when she was just a teenager in the 1920s. Height was a member of the YWCA in Rankin, but was unable to participate in swimming activities because African Americans could not utilize the pool. Isn't that interesting? She could attend school with white children, but she could not swim with them. She organized to change those rules, and although her efforts did not lead to the change, we should still celebrate them.

During Height's last years of high school, she began to get involved with anti-lynching work. Prior to graduation, she won a national orator contest, and her prize was a $1,000 scholarship. This was in 1929. That is equivalent to a little over $17,000 in 2023.

Who issued this scholarship? The Elks, a social club that was founded in the late 1800s. Why is it interesting that the Elks selected Dr. Height as their scholarship winner in 1929? Because the club was originally formed by and for minstrel show entertainers - white entertainers who wore blackface and depict Black people in racist ways. Their mission and values have evolved since then.

Height would go on to get accepted into Barnard College, but would not be able to attend because the school had reached capacity for the amount of Black students they would allow at one time. New York University and Columbia University were the institutions she turned to to earn multiple degrees in educational psychology.

After college, she went on to work for the Department of Welfare in New York City, as well as the YWCA in Harlem. Remember, when she was a teenager in the 1920s, she could not swim in the pool at a local YWCA, and now here she was, a leader within one of the branches.

After settling into her work, Height joined the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW). The organization was founded in 1935 by Mary McLeod Bethune. Bethune has an incredible story herself. She founded Bethune-Cookman, an HBCU in Daytona, Florida during 1904.

In the early 1940s, Height began working for YWCA national. Her work transformed to include building and mending relationships between Black and White folks. By 1946, the YWCA created a mandate to fight race-based injustices. In 1963, YWCA national made a commitment to desegregate every YWCA in the country. Height became the organization's first Director for their Office of Racial Integration. In her work, she supported communities across the country to have challenges and honest conversations about race.

In the late 1950s Height became a core leader in the national civil rights movement. Sexism internal and external to the movement really hindered the elevation of Black women as recognized leaders. One of her most notable contributions was the work she led to bring cohorts of Black and White women together from the South and the North to actively work together on the issue of segregation. She was one of the lead organizers for the March on Washington.

During the 1970s up to her death in 2010, Dr. Height was a trusted advisor for many US politicians. She was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1994. In 2004, Barnard College, the same institution that would not allow her to attend, honored her. She spent the last of her days working in the realm of reproductive justice.

We too celebrate and lift up the work of Dr. Dorthy Height.

The Cultural Erasure of Women

The cultural erasure of women in history refers to the systematic exclusion or marginalization of women from historical narratives, as well as the underrepresentation of their contributions to society. For centuries, women have faced significant barriers to education, public life, and professional opportunities, which has resulted in their experiences and achievements being largely ignored or overlooked in mainstream history.

One of the most significant examples of the cultural erasure of women in history is the way in which women's voices and experiences have been silenced or marginalized in written histories. In many cases, women's contributions to society have been ignored or attributed to men, and their stories and perspectives have been excluded from historical accounts. For example, in the field of science, many important discoveries and innovations made by women were attributed to their male colleagues or simply ignored altogether. One such example is the work of Rosalind Franklin, whose contributions to the discovery of the structure of DNA were largely unrecognized until decades after her death.

In addition to being ignored or misrepresented in written histories, women have also been excluded from many areas of public life, including politics, education, and the arts. This has made it difficult for women to gain the same recognition and opportunities as men, and has contributed to their underrepresentation in historical narratives. For example, many important women writers, artists, and activists have been overlooked or dismissed as "minor" figures, despite their significant contributions to their respective fields. This includes figures such as Jane Austen, Frida Kahlo, and Sojourner Truth, among others.

The cultural erasure of women in history has also had a significant impact on the way in which women are perceived and treated in society. By excluding women's voices and experiences from historical narratives, women are made to feel as though their lives and contributions are unimportant or insignificant. This can lead to feelings of alienation and disempowerment, and can also reinforce gender stereotypes and inequality.

However, in recent years, there has been a growing movement to recover and celebrate the stories and contributions of women throughout history. This includes efforts to document and share women's histories, as well as initiatives to increase the representation of women in various fields, such as politics, science, and the arts. For example, the #MeToo movement has brought renewed attention to the experiences of women and the need for greater representation and equity in all areas of society.

In addition, there have been efforts to revise and expand historical narratives to include the perspectives and contributions of women. This includes initiatives to include more women in school curricula, as well as efforts to recover and share the stories of women who have been overlooked or marginalized in history. For example, the National Women's History Museum in the United States is dedicated to documenting and sharing the stories of women throughout history, and has been instrumental in increasing awareness of women's contributions to society.

Other, specific examples of cultural erasure include:

• A civil rights pioneer, lawyer, and queer Black feminist, Dr. Pauli Murray was arrested for refusing to move to the back of a bus in Petersburg, VA in 1940—fifteen years before Rosa Parks did the same. Dr. Murray's published law reference book, *States' Laws on Race and Color* (1951), was used to form the winning argument in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

• Ada Lovelace was a British mathematician in the mid-1800s who created the first computer program for her colleague's computer prototype. "Ada" was the name given to the large-scale computer language developed by the U.S. Department of Defense in the early 1980s.

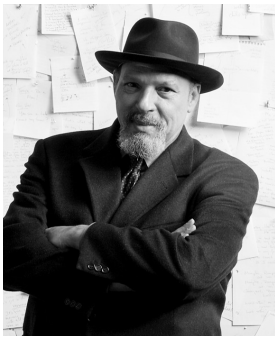
• Maria Anna Mozart was the Mozart family's first piano prodigy and composed music in the 1770s, which her brother Wolfgang highly praised. Her father ended her performance career when she was 18 and eligible for marriage. All her compositions have been lost.

• Delia Derbyshire, an early pioneer of electronic music in 1960s England, arranged the original theme music for the television show *Doctor Who*.

The cultural erasure of women in history has had a significant impact on how women are perceived and treated in society. By excluding women's voices and experiences from historical narratives, women are made to feel as though their lives and contributions are unimportant or insignificant. However, there has been a growing movement to recover and celebrate the stories and contributions of women throughout history, and to revise and expand historical narratives to include the perspectives and contributions of women. By doing so, we can work to create a more equitable and just society, where the experiences and contributions of all people are recognized and valued.

Theatre as a Catalyst for Change

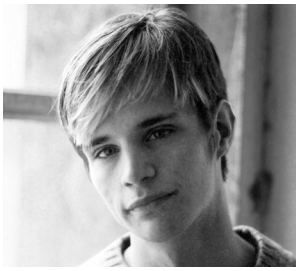
Live theatre is a unique art form that has the power to effect social change in a variety of ways. Theatre has the ability to engage audiences in a direct and personal way, creating a shared experience that can provoke discussion, reflection, and action. Live theatre is an interactive medium that involves both the artists and the audience, and great power can be found in the connection between players and patrons.



August Wilson

Theatre can be a powerful tool for raising awareness about social issues. Plays can tell stories about important social problems, such as poverty, inequality, racism, and gender discrimination. For example, August Wilson's play *Fences* examines the impact of racism and poverty on a working-class African American family. The play raises awareness about the struggles that many people face in their daily lives, and it encourages audiences to think about how these issues affect their own communities.

Theatre can also challenge societal norms and values. Plays can address taboo subjects, such as sexuality, mental illness, and addiction, that are often stigmatized by society. For example, Tennessee Williams' play *A Streetcar Named Desire* explores themes of mental illness and sexual violence. The play challenges the idea that women experiencing mental illness are weak or unstable, and it encourages audiences to reconsider their attitudes towards mental health and gender.



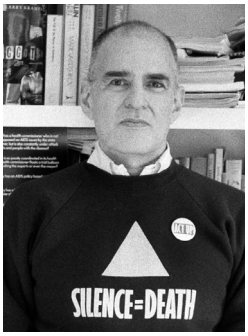
Matthew Shepard

Theatre has a unique ability to create empathy and understanding between people. When audiences watch a play, they are transported into the lives of the characters on stage. This can create a shared experience that encourages empathy and understanding. For example, the play *The Laramie Project* tells the story of Matthew Shepard, a young gay man who was brutally murdered in a hate crime. The play allows audiences to understand the experiences of the LGBTQ community and to see the impact that hate crimes can have on individuals and communities.

Theatre provides a space for dialogue and debate. After watching a play, audiences can engage in discussions about the issues presented in the play. This can create an opportunity for people to share their own experiences and opinions, and to learn from others. For example, after watching a performance of the play *Sweat* by Lynn Nottage, audiences can discuss the impact of deindustrialization on working-class communities and the rise of populism in the United States.

Lynn Nottage

Theatre may mobilize people to take action. Plays can encourage audiences to become more engaged in social and political issues, and to become advocates for change. For example, the play *The Normal Heart* by Larry Kramer tells the story of the early years of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in New York City. The play encourages audiences to become more engaged in the fight against HIV/AIDS and to support those affected by the disease.



Larry Kramer

Theatre creates opportunities for marginalized voices to be heard. For example, the play *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow is Enuf* by Ntozake Shange tells the stories of African American women in a series of monologues. The play gives voice to the experiences of African American women, who are often marginalized and silenced in society.

Ntozake Shange

In addition to these examples, theatre can effect social change in many other ways. For example, theatre can create community, promote cultural exchange, and foster creativity and innovation. However, it's important to note that not all theatre is effective in promoting social change. Theatre that is purely entertaining or that does not engage with social issues may not have a significant impact on society. In order for theatre to be effective in promoting social change, it must be relevant to people's lives and address the issues that they care about. It must also be accessible and understandable to a wide range of people.

The Art of the Civil Rights Movement

The arts played a significant role in the Civil Rights Movement, as a means of expressing the experiences and struggles of African Americans, and of mobilizing people to take action against racism and segregation. Here are some of the ways in which the arts contributed to the Civil Rights Movement:

Music: Music played a particularly important role in the Civil Rights Movement, as a means of creating a sense of solidarity and shared purpose among activists. Gospel and spirituals, in particular, became an important form of protest music, with songs such as "We Shall Overcome" and "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around" becoming anthems of the movement. Other forms of music, such as jazz and blues, also played a significant role in the movement, with artists such as Nina Simone and John Coltrane using their music to express their political views.

Literature: Literature was another important form of artistic expression in the Civil Rights Movement, with writers such as James Baldwin, Langston Hughes, and Maya Angelou using their work to critique the racist policies and attitudes of American society. The Harlem Renaissance, in particular, was an important moment in African American literature, with writers and artists coming together to express their experiences of racism and marginalization.

Theatre: Theatre was also an important means of expressing the experiences of African Americans, and of challenging the racist attitudes and policies of American society. The Black Arts Movement, which emerged in the 1960s, was particularly important in this regard, with playwrights such as Amiri Baraka and Lorraine Hansberry using their work to explore issues of race and identity.

Visual arts: Visual arts, including painting and sculpture, were also an important means of expressing the experiences of African Americans and challenging racist attitudes. The Black Arts Movement, in particular, was important in promoting the work of African American artists, and in challenging the marginalization of black artists in American society.

Overall, the arts played a significant role in the Civil Rights Movement, as a means of expressing the experiences and struggles of African Americans, and of mobilizing people to take action against racism and segregation. Through their ability to connect with people on an emotional and intellectual level, the arts helped to create a greater sense of empathy, understanding, and shared purpose, and to inspire people to work together to create a better and more just world.

MEET THE CAST

CADILLAC CREW features an ensemble of four very talented actors. Three of them are newcomers to the Hickory Community Theatre, though not to the stage, and another just joined us recently and is now playing her first major role.

Nasha Shandri plays Rachel

Nasha Shandri, who plays Rachel, is a Health Educator for Cabarrus Health Alliance who lives in Charlotte. Originally from Greenville, South Carolina, she holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Clark Atlanta University and a Master of Science degree from Maryland University of Integrative Health. As to why she chose CADILLAC CREW, Shandri says, "This story is not told in history classes and is a major part of American History. I love Rachel's ambition and drive."

Paulie Sales plays Abby

Paulie Sales, who plays Abby is a North Carolina native who currently lives in Newton and works as a Processing Assistant for Partners Health Management in Gastonia. She attended UNC Charlotte, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice. Her HCT debut was in December, as part of the ensemble of THE DROWSY CHAPERONE. Other theatre roles include Ensemble in MAMMA MIA and Maria in 9 TO 5, both at the Green Room Community Theatre.

Lillie Oden plays Dee

Lillie Oden, who plays Dee, currently lives in Concord, NC. She came to North Carolina several years ago when her family moved to Statesville. Her most recent stage experience was playing Beatrice in FOUR OLD BROADS at Lee St. Theatre in Salisbury. Oden is excited to be coming to HCT for the very first time and being in CADILLAC CREW. "It tells a wonderful story," she says, "about the civil rights era. Dee is a true believer and a fighter for the cause."

Rachel Kersenbrock plays Sarah

Rachel Kersenbrock, who plays Sarah, originally hails from Hawthorne, New Jersey initially relocated to North Carolina for college and now resides in Connelly Springs. She holds two degrees, a Bachelor's in Arts Administration from UNC Greensboro and an MBA from Western Governors University. Kersenbrock says she chose to come out for CADILLAC CREW because, "Women's rights and civil rights are things that most people take for granted. It's important to remember our history so it doesn't repeat."

CADILLAC CREW Reading List

Here are some books that can tell you more about the history of women, and other lesser known figures in the civil rights movement. All of these are available through our parters at the Hickory Public Library.

A More Beautiful and Terrible History: the Uses and Misuses of Civil Rights History by Jeanne Theoharis.

Say It Loud : Great Speeches on Civil Rights and African American Identity edited by Catherine Ellis and Stephen Drury Smith

My Life, My Love, My Legacy an autobiography by Coretta Scott King

Our Separate Ways : Women and the Black Freedom Movement in Durham, North Carolina by Christina Greene

Unsung Heroes of Social Justice by Todd Kortemeier • ***Ella Baker : Freedom Bound*** by Joanne Grant

The Youngest Marcher : The Story of Audrey Faye Hendricks, a Young Civil Rights Activist by Cynthia Levinson

At the Dark End of the Street : Black Women, Rape, and Resistance - a New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power by Danielle L. McGuire

The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks by Jeanne Theoharis • ***The Story of Ruby Bridges*** by Robert Coles

Nina : Jazz Legend and Civil Rights Activist Nina Simone by Alice Brie`re-Haquet

Shirley Chisholm : A Biography by Susan Brownmiller

HICKORY COMMUNITY THEATRE present

and the CORNING FOUNDATION

RATED PG-13

February 17 through March 4, 2023
Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30pm Sundays at 2:30pm
and Thursday, March 2nd at 7:30pm

$16 for adults and $10 for youth and students.
To purchase tickets visit hickorytheatre.org
or call the box office at 828-328-2283.

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