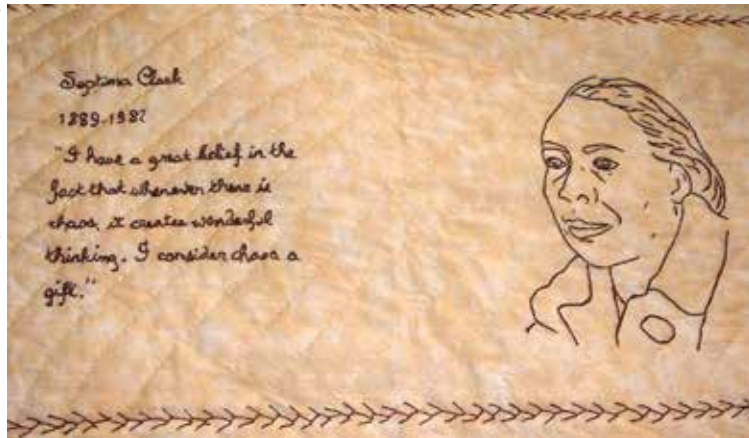


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Septima P. Clark is featured in a quilt of women who worked for freedom and equality, created by Nancy A. Bekofske, 2013

The Septima Clark Women in Literature Award, 2022



IN 2019, the Septima Clark Book Award was established by the National Council for the Social Studies to recognize notable, high-quality trade books that center on the challenges and accomplishments of women, both in the United States and internationally. The award encourages authors and publishers to create accurate, authentic non-fiction texts for elementary to high school readers portraying women's experiences. The award is named after Septima Poinsette Clark—referred to as the “mother of the civil rights movement” by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.—for her significant contributions to the civil rights movement and to education as a teacher, activist, and civics leader. Such was her impact in empowering individuals—especially women—and changing her communities that she was honored with a Living Legacy Award in 1979.

In addition to the requirement of being nonfiction trade books for elementary through high school youth, texts must present accurate depictions of women's stories, issues and perspectives, be thoroughly researched, well-written, and reflect originality.

Notable this year is that some winners challenge notions of genre, illustrating ways creative nonfiction, poetry, and BIPOC ways of knowing disrupt taken-for-granted ideas around non-fiction. Others explore intersectionality between gender and race or disability, providing rich representations of multifaceted women who persisted in their goals and ethical commitments, despite societal obstructions. We hope the inclusion of these outstanding books in classrooms, libraries, and homes will help both children and adults become more aware of women's history, issues, and perspectives and expand readers' own ways of seeing the world.

—Heidi J Torres, Chair,
Septima Clark Book
Awards Committee

Elementary Level Winner

The Fearless Flights of Hazel Ying Lee, by Julie Leung, illustrated by Julie Kwon. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers. Reviewed by Sarah Segal, 6th Grade Teacher, Hood River Middle School, Hood River, Oregon.



Born in Portland, Oregon, in 1912, Hazel Ying Lee grew up in a time when Chinese Americans were required to carry identification, were not allowed in certain parts of town, and were only employable in “invisible jobs.”

Despite the racial discrimination she faced, Lee, considered “the fearless one” in her family, decided to become a pilot.

During World War II, when the U.S. government created the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP), Lee signed up. Participants became trained test pilots; they ferried aircrafts to various locations and trained new pilots. However, they held no military standing. As one of 1,074 WASP certified pilots, Lee also ranked as one of 132 “flying pursuit” pilots, qualified to fly fighter aircrafts.

Sadly, in 1944, Lee died in a military test flight tragedy. Influenced by the Cantonese tradition of feng (wind) shui (water), her family found her the perfect resting place. However, they were told it was a whites-only cemetery. They petitioned President Franklin Roosevelt in protest of the cemetery’s rules. Ultimately, Lee was buried in their chosen place, overlooking the Willamette River.

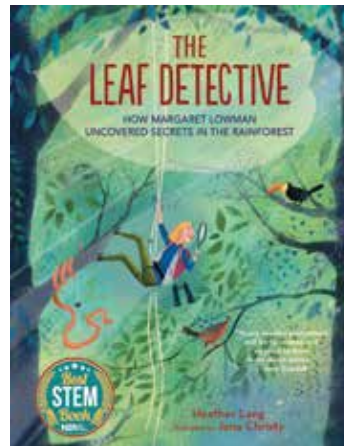
This book is an inspiring resource honoring a unique role-model in an historically non-traditional role. Leung presents the systemic racism Lee experienced, making it accessible to elementary-age students. Back matter expands upon Lee’s life and WASP notability including receiving veteran status in 1977 and the award

of a Congressional Gold Medal to all WASP members in 2009.

Social Studies Themes: 2 TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; 3 PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS; 5 INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS; 6 POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE.

Elementary Level Honoree

The Leaf Detective: How Margaret Loman Uncovered Secrets in the Rainforest, by Heather Lang, illustrated by Jana Christy. Calkins Creek: An Imprint of Boyd’s Mills & Kane, New York. Reviewed by Sydney G. Beauchamp, Senior Lecturer, Department of Elementary Education, School of Education, Indiana University South Bend, Indiana.



Margaret (Meg) Lowman was told she couldn’t succeed as a scientist because of her gender. But Lowman challenged people’s perception of what a woman could do. As a graduate student in Sydney, Australia, Lowman

was the first scientist to make the difficult climb to the canopy in the rainforest to study trees. She figured out how to conserve the trees, plants, and animals and save them from looming industries. Lowman discovered and documented new species of plants around the world. She is a fierce advocate and has empowered women and minorities to study science.

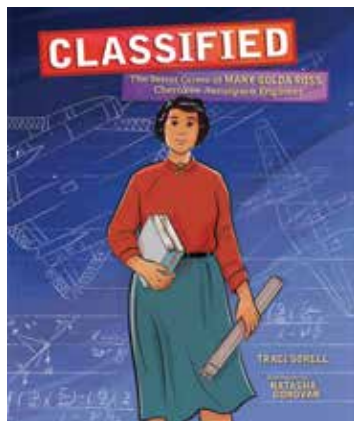
This brilliantly written book is filled with intense emotions of an exhilarating first experience, making the reader feel as if they are in the Australian rainforest with Canopy Meg. The digitally created illustrations bring the flora and fauna to life. Rainforest facts, cleverly written on leaves, are included throughout this story. The Author’s Note updates readers about Margaret Lowman and includes a photo of Margaret and the author together on a rainforest adventure tour. At the back of the book, a gorgeous illustration of the

different layers of the rainforest with descriptive captions makes this book a perfect blending of timely environmental advocacy for the preservation of nature while promoting women and minorities in STEM related careers.

Social Studies Themes: ❶ CULTURE; ❷ TIME, CONTINUITY AND CHANGE; ❸ PEOPLE, PLACES AND ENVIRONMENTS; ❹ SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY; ❺ GLOBAL CONNECTIONS; ❻ CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES

Elementary Level Honoree

Classified: The Secret Career of Mary Golda Ross, Cherokee Aerospace Engineer, by Traci Sorell, illustrated by Natasha Donovan. Millbrook Press. Reviewed by Jennifer Gallagher, Department of Literacy Studies, English Education & History Education, College of Education, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina.



Drawing on the Cherokee values she was raised with in Northeastern Oklahoma, Mary Golda Ross navigated isolation and gendered expectations in math classes to go on to play a pivotal role in mid-twentieth-

century space travel. She became Lockheed Aircraft Corporation’s first female engineer. Then she worked to open pathways for other women in engineering.

Cherokee author Traci Sorell highlights how the Cherokee values of collaboration, humility and education played pivotal roles in helping Golda Ross face both social and scientific obstacles. The story also highlights the intersection of Golda Ross’s identities as Cherokee and as a woman.

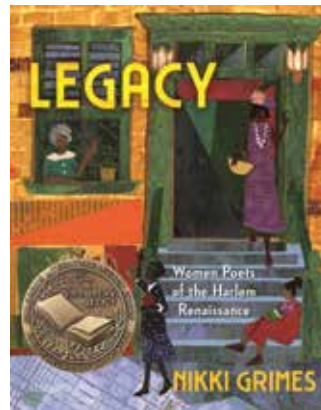
Readers will appreciate the student friendly language as well as the supplementary resources, including an Author’s Note, Timeline, Cherokee Language Resource, Source Notes and Bibliography.

Social Studies Themes: ❺ INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS AND INSTITUTIONS; ❹ SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY.

Secondary/Intermediate Winner

Legacy: Women Poets of the Harlem Renaissance, by Nikki Grimes. Bloomsbury Children’s Books. Reviewed by Valencia Abbott, History Teacher, Rockingham Early College High School, Wentworth, North Carolina.

Historical truths can manifest themselves in different ways, such as the bold strokes of Jacob Lawrence’s paintings, the textural choices of costume designer Ruth E. Carter, or the words of Harlem Renaissance poets.



Nikki Grimes’s *Legacy* introduces readers to little known women poets of the Harlem Renaissance. Poems are presented alongside a reinterpretation of the past with original art of present day African American female

illustrators. The artistic renderings alongside the poetry create a trifecta of historical perspectives. The aesthetic curation of words and images link the early twentieth century Harlem Renaissance to contemporary accounts of Black culture and bring deeper understanding. This book may become a teacher’s guide for years of lesson plans, to quiet moments of reflection, while providing our students a personal connection to the legacy of Black women’s voices.

Social Studies Themes: ❶ CULTURE; ❷ TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; ❸ PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS; ❹ INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY.

Secondary/Intermediate Honoree

Code Name Badass: The True Story of Virginia Hall, by Heather Demetrios. Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Reviewed by Elizabeth Sturm, Associate Professor, Department of Special Education, College of Education and Social Sciences at Lewis University, Romeoville, Illinois.

“Spy! Saboteur! Shero!” These three words on the book cover set the tone for this exciting and fascinating biography of Virginia Hall, a World War II spy who fought the Nazis for the British and

American Allied Forces. Prior to the start of the war, Hall was an embassy clerk in Turkey, which in itself was a non-traditional career choice for a young woman from Maryland.



Author Heather Demetrios chronicles the many ways that Hall challenged established norms, first of women's roles in diplomacy and then, after a leg amputation following a hunting accident, challenging ableism. She became an ambulance driver and then a spy in France during the Nazi occupation. The bonus

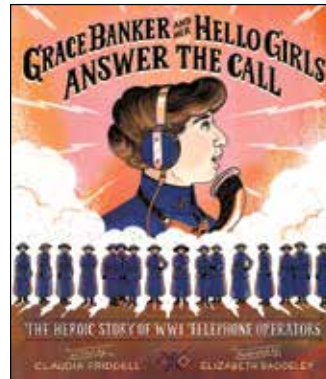
back matter about the "Band of Sisters" includes names of the other female spies who aided the fight in France. Interspersed references to current pop culture and language will draw teen readers into this well-researched biography.

Social Studies Themes: 1 CULTURE; 2 TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; 3 INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY; 4 CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES.

Secondary/Intermediate Honoree

Grace Banker and Her Hello Girls Answer the Call: The Heroic Story of WWI Telephone Operators, by Claudia Friddell, illustrated by Elizabeth Baddeley.

Calkins Creek. Reviewed by Kristy A. Brugar, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.



Author Claudia Friddell and illustrator Elizabeth Baddeley present the important contributions of women telephone operators in World War I. Grace Banker answered a U.S. government appeal for women

with a college education, fluency in French, and experience as telephone operators. She enlisted and was named Chief Operator of the 1st Unit of World War I telephone operators in the battlefields of France. Banker and the 33 women under her charge as Signal Operators/Signal Corps Girls transferred orders and communicated secret messages between the Americans and the French. Banker was the first and only woman operator in the Signal Corps to be awarded the Army's Distinguished Service Medal. Quotes from Grace's diaries and interviews are interspersed throughout the text and historically accurate images personalize and illustrate the women's experiences. The book's back matter includes an Afterword, Bibliography, and a Timeline.

Social Studies Themes: 3 INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY; 5 INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS.





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