

The Carter G. Woodson Book Awards, 2019

The Carter G. Woodson Book Award honors exceptional non-fiction trade books that explore issues related to ethnic minorities and race relations in the United States with sensitivity and accuracy. The award is named for renowned scholar Carter G. Woodson, who dedicated his career to researching and preserving the neglected history of African Americans. Often referred to as the “father of Black History,” Woodson initiated the movement that led to Black History Month.

In 1974, the National Council for the Social Studies developed this award to promote and advance the dissemination of outstanding trade books for youth and young-adult readers and to increase the body of authentic social studies resources.

This year the Carter G. Woodson Committee selected six books based on the following criteria: (1) nonfiction, (2) set in the United States, (3) accurately reflects the perspectives, cultures, and values of the ethnic/racial group portrayed, and (4) written for young people. The committee read and reviewed an extensive number of exceptional books, and selected the following literature, published in 2018. We hope these books enhance your professional libraries and classroom teaching resources.

—Sarah Segal, Chair, Carter G. Woodson Book Awards Committee



Elementary Level Winner

The Vast Wonder of the World: Biologist Ernest Everett Just, by Mélima Mangal, illustrated by Luisa Uribe. Millbrook Press. Reviewed by Valencia Abbott, Rockingham Early College High School, Wentworth, North Carolina.

This book shares the fascinating history of Ernest Everett Just, an African American scientist born after the Reconstruction Era. Ernest Just survived numerous hardships, natural disasters, and the injustices of Jim Crow to become a pioneer in the field of science. In 1915, he earned the first NAACP Spingarn Medal for the highest achievement of an American of African descent (an honor Carter G. Woodson would win in 1926).

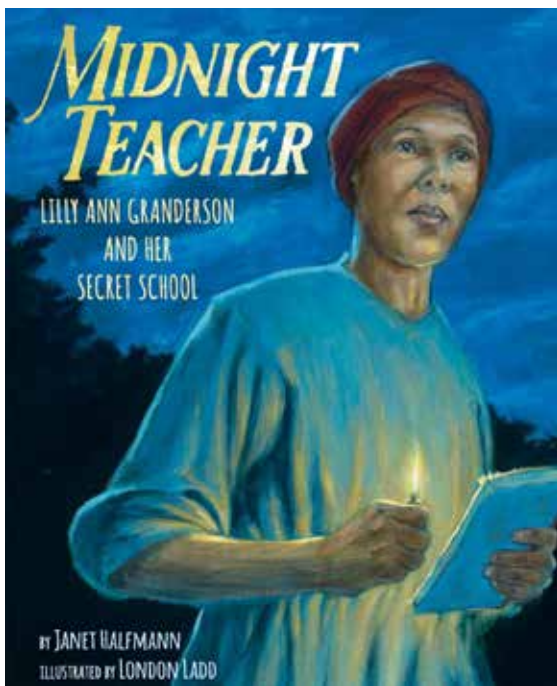
Ernest Just, born in 1883 South Carolina, broke new ground in the field of cell biology and the fertilization of the egg. Today, he would be known as an ecological developmental biologist, but during his lifetime he was known as an embryologist because of his research on egg cells and the cells of developing animal embryos.

In the pages of this extremely informative and engaging book, we discover how location (“South Carolina, where rivers and ocean meet”) coupled with reading (“words came to life as magical spirits”) can fuel amazing discoveries (“the egg cell directed its own development during fertilization”). This excellent book includes detailed author’s and illustrator’s notes, a section entitled “More about Ernest Everett Just’s Science,” a historical timeline, and a glossary of a handful of scientific words.

Social Studies Themes: ② TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; ③ PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS; ⑤ SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY

Elementary Level Honoree

Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and her Secret School, by Janet Halfmann, illustrated by London Ladd. Lee and Low Books Inc. Reviewed by Janae J. Oveson, Department of Teacher Education, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

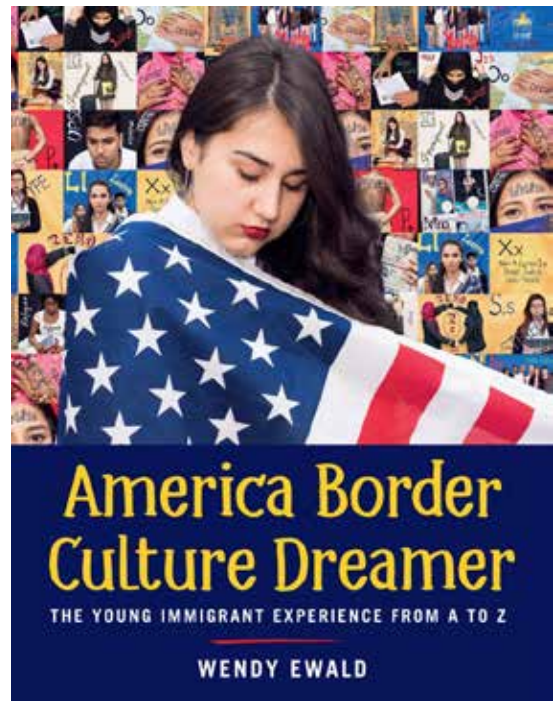


What would you risk for the opportunity to learn to read and write? In Mississippi, in the mid-1800s, these skills were illegal for enslaved people to learn. Violation of this code was punishable by 39 lashes with the whip, which could often mean death. In spite of this, Lilly Ann Granderson organized slaves and started a school to teach these skills in the middle of the night.

Born into slavery in the early 1820s, Lilly Ann Granderson spent much of her youth with one master in Kentucky. When the adults weren’t watching, the master’s children often played school with her. She would practice her letters in the dirt of the garden or in the flour on the kitchen table as she worked. She read everything she could get her hands on and began sharing her knowledge with other slaves when the master and his family were away at church.

Midnight Teacher: Lilly Ann Granderson and her Secret School brings to light the story of a brave woman and the risks she took to share her own knowledge of reading and writing with other enslaved people. The author draws upon primary sources as well as descendant accounts to tell the story; these notes are detailed in the back matter. Beautiful illustrations enhance the storyline on each page. *Midnight Teacher* is a well-researched story that will be a welcome addition in elementary classrooms.

Social Studies Themes: ① CULTURE; ② TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; ③ PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS; ⑦ INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY; ⑤ INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS; ⑥ POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE.



Middle Level Winner

America Border Culture Dreamer: The Young Immigrant Experience from A to Z, by Wendy Ewald. Little, Brown and Company. Reviewed by Elizabeth Sturm, assistant professor, Department of Special Education, College of Education at Lewis University, Romeoville, Illinois.

Most young adult and children’s literature is written *for* their audience, not *with* them. For *America Border Culture Dreamer*, writer, photographer, and teacher Wendy Ewald collaborated with 18 diverse high school students to create an alphabet tale that highlights the students’ immigrant stories and artwork. Ewald elevates the alphabet book genre from a literacy tool for emergent readers to a middle level literacy tool for social justice. Student-chosen words such as Faith, Leave, Occupy, Prisoner, Trust, and Visa are paired with the corresponding alphabet letter and juxtaposed over bold photographic images. Each alphabet letter includes a quote or personal narrative,

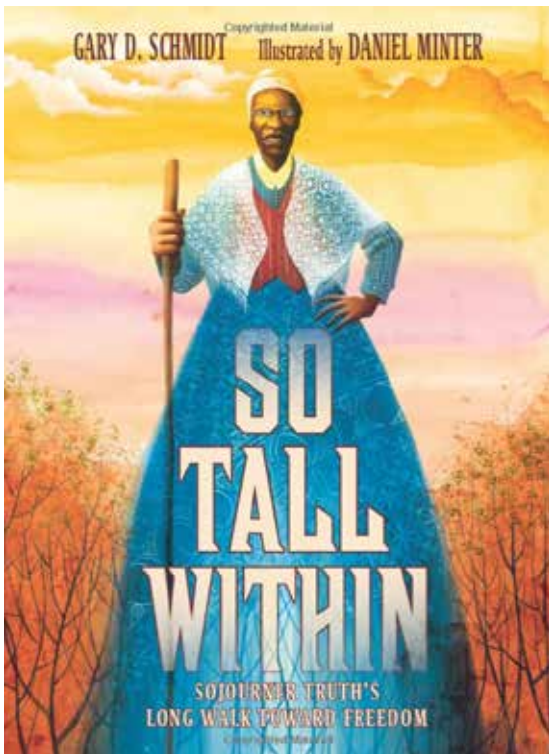
either written by a student or based on a student interview, that connects to the word and image, providing a lens into an immigrant experience.

The students openly share joys and sadness, hopes, dreams, and fears. Their poignant adolescent voices are a much-needed addition to classrooms. The students offer insightful comparisons between their native cultures and adopted American culture. Ewald's author note highlights the methods she used to capture the images and text, and she details student involvement. *America Border Culture Dreamer* not only provides more windows into immigrant experiences, but also could easily serve as a model for classroom alphabet book projects.

Social Studies Themes: ❶ CULTURE; ❷ TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; ❸ PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS; ❹ INDIVIDUAL, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS; ❺ POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE; ❻ CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES.

Middle Level Honoree

So Tall Within: Sojourner Truth's Long Walk Toward Freedom, by Gary D. Schmidt, illustrated by Daniel Minter, Roaring Brook Press. Reviewed by Ann Adkins, associate professor, Education Department, Clarke University, Dubuque, Iowa.



Using a beautiful mixture of poetry and prose, Gary Schmidt tells the story of Sojourner Truth in a way that is both heart wrenching and inspiring. Born into slavery as Isabella Baumfree, at nine years old she was sold away from her mother. Growing up, she was badly treated by the man who purchased her. In the next few years, she was sold two more times. Readers learn of Isabella's escape to freedom with

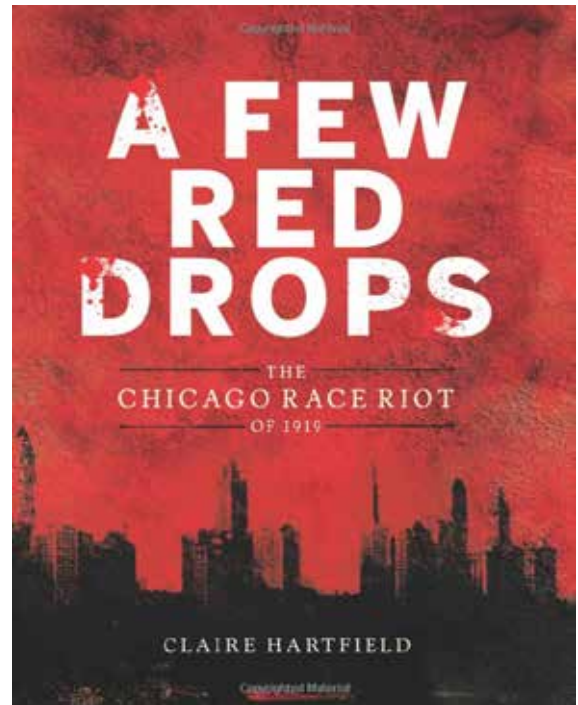
her baby daughter, her fight to free her son, and about the moment she took the name "Sojourner Truth" to travel and tell the truth about slavery. She was a woman to be admired for her courage and respected for her willingness to stand up for justice.

Daniel Minter's hauntingly exquisite illustrations mirror the evocative poetry and prose used to tell the story and enhance the author's message. Whatever a student's age, there is much to be gained from hearing Sojourner Truth's story.

Social Studies Themes: ❶ CULTURE; ❷ TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; ❸ INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY; ❹ INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS; ❺ POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE; ❻ CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES.

Secondary Level Winner

A Few Red Drops: The Chicago Race Riot of 1919, by Claire Hartfield. Clarion Books. Reviewed by Kristy Brugar, associate professor, Social Studies Education, Instructional Leadership and Academic Curriculum Department, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.



This engaging and thought-provoking historical narrative opens on a hot day in July 1919. Fourteen-year-old John Turner Harris and four friends, all African American, were cooling off from the heat in Lake Michigan. Suddenly, from the beach, a young, white man began throwing rocks at them. Eventually, one of the rocks struck and killed one of John Harris's friends, Eugene Williams. Later, when John pointed out the culprit, a white police officer refused to do anything. This calamity ignited several days of violence all over Chicago, in which 38 people of both races died and more than 500 people were wounded.

Throughout the narrative, Hartfield provides readers with an overview of complex social and racial issues in the United States. Hartfield uses archival photos and prints to illustrate the narrative. In addition, she included thorough source notes, a bibliography, and an index.

Social Studies Themes: 2 TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; 4 INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY; 10 CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES

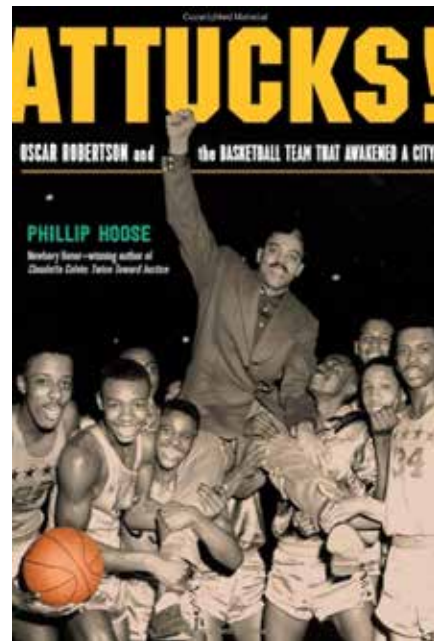
Secondary Level Honoree

Attucks! Oscar Robertson and the Basketball Team That Awakened a City, by Phillip Hoose. Farrar Straus Giroux Books for Young Readers. Reviewed by Heidi J. Torres, assistant professor, Elementary Education, Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma

In an eminently readable style, Phillip Hoose chronicles the story of how one high school basketball team overcame great odds to become the first all-black squad in U.S. history to win a racially open championship. The team's victory and the events leading up to it forced a city and state to confront deeply entrenched racism and to accelerate the integration of city schools and the community.

Hoose does an excellent job of including historical background to provide context for the groundbreaking event, tracing its beginnings to the Great Migration, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in Indiana, and Jim Crow policies that led to the establishment of Crispus Attucks, the segregated high school of the championship-winning team. His description of the challenges the team faced—from racist referees, to being blocked from playing in tournaments, to death threats—make their achievements all the more remarkable.

The book reads like a fast-paced novel, with many primary-source visuals and first-person quotes lending immediacy to the



story. Sidebar articles deepen readers' knowledge on significant events, concepts, and individuals central to the narrative. While the powerful story is certainly sports-driven, the underlying text is really about African American struggle for civil rights. A highly engrossing read, even for those who are not sports-minded.

Back matter includes follow-up information on players, a bibliography, and extensive chapter notes.

Social Studies Themes: 2 TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; 5 INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS; 6 POWER, AUTHORITY AND GOVERNANCE; 10 CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES

Worthy of Exploring

Turning Pages: My Life Story, by Sonia Sotomayor, illustrated by Lulu Delacre. Penguin Young Readers / Philomel Books. (2019 Notable Social Studies Trade Book.)

Chasing King's Killer: The Hunt for Martin Luther King Jr.'s Assassin, by James L. Swanson. Scholastic Press. (2019 Notable Social Studies Trade Book.)

Martin Rising: Requiem for a King, by Andrea Davis Pinkney and Brian Pinkney. Scholastic Press. (2019 Notable Social Studies Trade Book.)

Boots on the Ground: America's War in Vietnam, by Elizabeth Partridge. Penguin Young Readers / Viking BYR. (2019 Notable Social Studies Trade Book.)

