



BRIDGES

"Education is all a matter of building bridges." Ralph Ellison

A Wiggins Society Newsletter | Winter Edition 08-09 | Vol. 1

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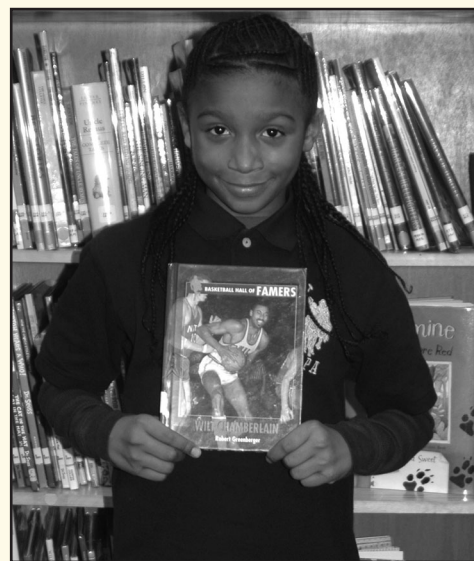
Hoop Reading

Jaaron Andrade loves hoops. If there's a game going on, he's in it. So it was not a surprise to learn that last year, when Jaaron was assigned to write a biography for Black History Month, he turned to *Wilt (the Stilt) Chamberlain*. Jaaron told me that Wilt, who played in the NBA for the Warriors, 76ers and Lakers, broke a record by scoring 100 points in a game. When asked how Wilt did it, Jaaron replied simply, "ball hoggin."

The book Jaaron chose, *Wilt Chamberlain*, is one of the many sports books in the Paul Cuffee School's Wiggins Collection. All tell stories of men and women who meet or exceed their goals; and a number of them are beautifully illustrated.

Two people were important to Jaaron as he selected his book. "Coach" (Cuffee's lower school Physical Education teacher, Marlon Mussington) talked a lot with Jaaron as he was trying to decide who to study. But the assist goes to Librarian Megan Southard, who made the match between Jaaron and Wilt. Jaaron gushed, "She is so nice, and she helps kids find books."

Jaaron agreed with Miss Southard that especially now, following the election of an African-American President, the Wiggins Collection is vital to students seeking books about African Americans, be they poets or sports heroes. When asked what book he would like to read next, Jaaron quickly pulled one about Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. from the shelf.



Jaaron Andrade with the Wiggins Collection book
Basketball Hall of Famers: Wilt Chamberlain
by Robert Greenberger

Paul Cuffee School is fortunate to have a named collection of books by and about African Americans in its fledgling library. To help add new titles to the collection each year, we established an endowment at the RI Foundation.

This fund is growing yearly because of increased membership in the Wiggins Society and the generous donations of people like you. To request more information about the Wiggins Collection and how you can help become part of this important project, please contact Julia Karahalís, Director of Institutional Advancement, at Paul Cuffee School, at 401-453-2626 x118 or jkarahalís@paulcuffee.org. Or contact Stanley Cobb, Chair of the Wiggins Society, at 401-215-3704 or jscobb@gmail.com. 📖

A Letter from the Librarian

Megan Southard, Paul Cuffee's

librarian, introducing first grader

Sasha Garcia to the book *Shades of*

Black by Sandra L. Pinkney (author)

and Myles Pinkney (illustrator).



Since the beginning of the school year, our youngest students have been experiencing the freedom and excitement of browsing the Paul Cuffee School library shelves. They are learning the lay of the land so that they can locate what they are looking for, and maybe take a chance with an author or genre that is new to them. During our weekly class sessions, we have been doing tours, scavenger hunts, and creating maps of the library. Now when they walk through the door, and they are in the mood for something spooky, they know exactly where to find Patricia McKissack's *The Dark-Thirty: Southern Tales of the Supernatural*.

To connect the maritime theme to our library navigation skills lesson, I show our students some antique maps and talk about the compass rose. We pretend that we are like the early explorers, forging our way towards buried treasure – our next great read. I have to remind them along the way that pirates from previous centuries didn't just print a map off of Google Earth. They

actually had to travel to uncharted territories in order to record features on a map. So our library mapping exercise starts with a special trip during which we explore the nooks and crannies of our small, but growing collection. My favorite stop on this library tour is at the Wiggins Collection.

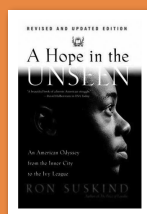
As we stand in front of these books, we talk about Rosalind Wiggins, the woman in the picture on one of the shelves. I mention her many attributes, including how much of an expert on Paul Cuffee she was. When I emphasize how Paul Cuffee School is the only school that has this named collection, I watch their eyes widen. I am proud of this shiny new cluster of titles, and it is obvious. The conclusion of this tour results in a flurry of activity around these shelves. When it comes time to pick out books, the children now know that the red dot on the spine means that these books are very special.

I watch a student snatch up *Bud Not Buddy*, the story of a boy navigating the roads of Jazz-age Michigan in search of his true

father. I remind him that we also have the new Christopher Paul Curtis book called *Elijah of Buxton*, and that it won the 2008 Coretta Scott King award. "You'll have to read that one next," I tell him. For one of my chattier and more exuberant students, I check out, *Nothing But Trouble: The Story of Althea Gibson*. While scanning her library card I explain that this is a book about the wildest tomboy in the history of Harlem, who goes on to win the Wimbledon Championship. She loves this description and skips off with the book.

These titles are a source of pride for our students, for me and for the School. I am thrilled that the Collection is growing because every week I watch the half-filled shelves emptied by eager hands. I look forward to the day that I can point to the entire wall of shelves behind me, brimming with new titles in our Wiggins Collection. "No need for you to crowd your neighbors," I'll say. "There are more than enough books for everyone."

BOOK REVIEWS:



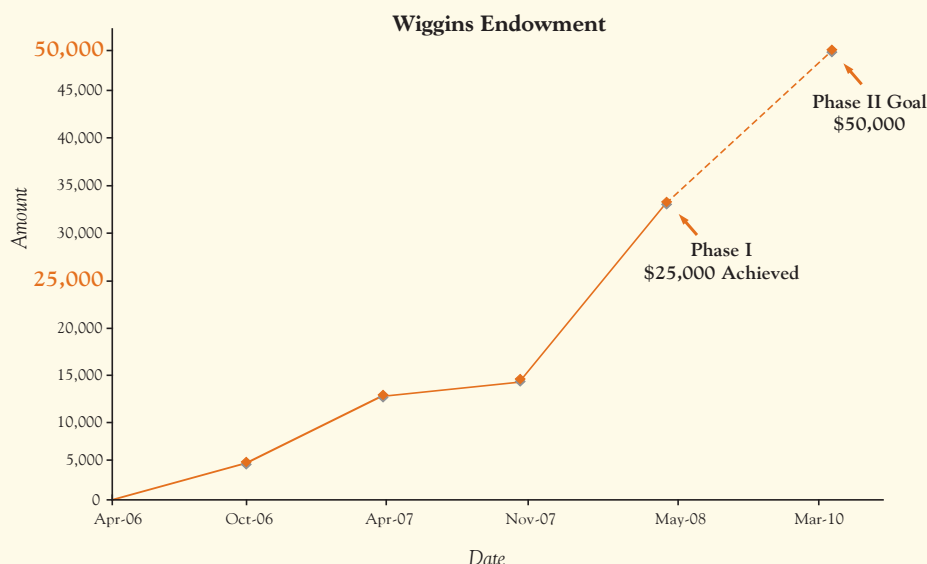
A Hope in the Unseen, by Ron Suskind, depicts how a young inner-city student found ways to use a positive attitude to change major obstacles in his life, leading him to then go on to graduate from Brown University. A must read!

First Endowment at Paul Cuffee School is Named for Rosalind C. Wiggins!

Your generous gifts to the Wiggins Fund helped us to exceed our \$25,000 Phase I goal. In just 30 months, we received 111 gifts totaling more than \$30,000! This achievement is a remarkable testimony to the spirit and passion of our dear friend Posy and to your willingness to help improve the quality of educational resources available to Paul Cuffee students of all ages.

With Phase I completed, 100% of your contributions to the Wiggins Fund have been transferred to the official Rosalind C. Wiggins Endowment at The Rhode Island Foundation. We are now working towards doubling this endowment so that we can fill the shelves of the Wiggins Collection in both the middle and lower school library rooms. We hope to reach and exceed our \$50,000 Phase II goal by the anniversary of Posy's birthday next spring (March 17, 2010).

Your tax deductible gifts can be sent to Paul Cuffee School with the R.C. Wiggins Endowment noted in the memo section of your check. Please send your donations to: Paul Cuffee School, Advancement Office, 459 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908. ☞



Providence Shelter for Colored Children Selects PCS Library for Grant Award

Based on a competitive grant application and the compelling need for our school to grow its library collections, specifically its Wiggins Collection of books by and about African Americans, the Providence Shelter for Colored Children (PSCC) donated \$4,400 to Paul Cuffee School's library to be spent in the 2008-09 academic year. Thanks to the PSCC's generous donation, School Librarian Megan Southard has already purchased books, audiobooks and DVD's by and about African Americans to support students' interests and the K-8 curriculum at Cuffee. ☞

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Through March 8

A Raisin in the Sun
by Lorraine Hansberry,
Directed by Brian McEleney

Trinity Repertory Company
201 Washington St.
Providence, RI 02903
Showtimes Vary
Reservations: 401-351-4242
www.trinityrep.com

April 9 - April 26

Gem of The Ocean
by Pulitzer Prize-winner August Wilson,
Directed by Don Mays

The Providence Black Repertory Company
276 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903
Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays
at 7:00 p.m., Sundays at 3:00 p.m.
www.blackrep.org

Wed., April 22

Remembering Rosalind C. Wiggins
with Guest Speaker,
Author John Edgar Wideman *

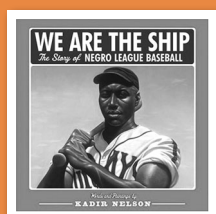
Paul Cuffee School
459 Promenade Street
Providence, RI 02908
Time: 7:00-8:00 p.m.
Reservations: 401-453-2626 x118
(Limited Seating)
www.paulcuffeeschool.org

* Come prepared for an evening of Q&A's with author John Edgar Wideman as he discusses one of his major works of nonfiction, *Brothers and Keepers* (1984). (Visit your library or local bookstore for a copy of his book.)

Fri., May 1

Potpouri Series: Complexions
Contemporary Ballet

Rhode Island College / Roberts Hall Auditorium
600 Mt. Pleasant Ave.
Providence, RI 02908
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Reservations: 401-456-8144
www.ric.edu/pfa



We Are the Ship: The Story of the Negro League of Baseball, by Kadir Nelson, is an exceptional portrait of unrelenting athletes who confronted racism, segregation, and hardship just to get a chance to play the beloved American game. A non-fiction narrative with beautiful paintings by the author, it is not to be missed, even if you are not a baseball fan!

“Rosa Parks *sat* so
Martin Luther could
walk, Martin
Luther *walked*
so Barack Obama
could *run*, Barack
Obama *ran* so all
our children could
fly.” RAPPER JAY-Z'S VERSION

Library Wins Coretta Scott King Book Grant

Each year, the American Library Association (ALA) presents prestigious Coretta Scott King Awards (CSK) to African-American authors and illustrators of children's books. According to the ALA website, *these annual awards recognize outstanding, inspirational and educational literary contributions that promote understanding and appreciation of the culture of all peoples and their myriad contributions to the American dream.* After the awards are decided, the review book submissions, including the award winners, are donated to two or three non-profit organizations from around the world whose competitive applications demonstrate the multiple requirements for a CSK book donation grant. Thanks to the Wiggins Collection and our impressive library program, Paul Cuffee School was one of the three CSK beneficiaries in 2008! The Cuffee library received one hundred forty wonderful new books for our lower and middle school students to enjoy.

The library, with its growing Wiggins Collection, has become a magical place, conjuring up eager students, beautiful books and generous donors. The Coretta Scott King Award is further evidence of how our combined efforts are helping to continue the legacy of Rosalind Wiggins by providing our students with library resources that truly expand their horizons! 📖

JOIN THE WIGGINS SOCIETY TODAY!

Members of the Wiggins Society comprise a group of individuals who share Posy Wiggins's passion for lifelong learning and social justice. We are eclectic readers whose book lists often include titles by and about African Americans. Please consider joining us!

Membership benefits include this newsletter (to be published twice a year), **invitation to our annual event** (headlined this year by the author John Edgar Wideman), and **the opportunity to connect with others** who share your interests in furthering the education of young people with inclusive library books and resources. Annual Membership in the Society is \$25. All membership fees are transferred directly to the Wiggins Endowment. Members are encouraged to renew each year by Posy's birthday. Non-members are invited to join all year long. Enjoy the benefits of membership while supporting the Wiggins Collection! Join today!



The Wiggins Society
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pcs@paulcuffee.org

Wish List for the Wiggins Collection

Did you know that you can honor a special occasion, friend, teacher or colleague with a gift to the Paul Cuffee School Library? Please send your donation with a note in the memo section of your check indicating your desire to support the Wiggins Collection. Our librarian, Megan Southard, will order a book from her lengthy wish list and place a bookplate inside with whatever name you request. A beautiful note card will be sent to you to acknowledge your tax-deductible gift and another one will be sent to the person you honor mentioning your gift to our library on their behalf. You may even select a specific title from the partial list below or go to our website at www.paulcuffeeschool.org to see a more extensive wishlist that includes titles requested by our students and faculty. Your gifts will help us to grow the Wiggins Collection for Paul Cuffee kids! Thank you!

Books:

When Birds Could Talk and Bats Could Sing: Chancing in the Wings by Debbie Allen
My Rows and Piles of Coins by Tololwa M. Mollel
The Hunterman and the Crocodile by Baba Wague Diakite
Vision of Beauty: The Story of Sarah Breedlove Walker by Kathryn Lasky
Beautiful Blackbird by Ashley Brian
Red Rose Box by Brenda Woods
Rap a Tap Tap by Leo and Diane Dillon
Off-Color by Jane McDonald
In the Time of the Drums by Kim Siegelson
Money Hungry by Sharon Flake
Black Cat by Christopher Myers
Jazz by Walter Dean Myers
Maizon at Blue Hill by Jacqueline Woodson
Visiting Langston by Willie Perdomo

Audiobooks:

Anansi and The Talking Melon by Eric Kimmel
Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears by Verna Aardema
Malcolm X By Any Means Necessary by Walter Dean Myers
I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This by Jacqueline Woodson
Something Upstairs by Avi
Elijah Buxton by Christopher Paul Curtis
Ellington is Not a Street by Ntozake Shange
House of Dies Drear by Virginia Hamilton
The People Could Fly by Virginia Hamilton
Handbook for Boys by Walter Dean Myers
Hoops by Walter Dean Myers
Holes by Louis Sachar
The Friendship by Mildred Taylor
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred Taylor

* For a complete list please see www.paulcuffeeschool.org