



# Library podcast

## Exploring Black Brilliance and Black Joy through Storytelling and Writing: Family & Friends

### 00:00:01 Amy Twito

Hi everyone, and thank you so much for joining us tonight. My name is Amy Twito, and I'm the informal learning program manager at the Seattle Public Library. And I want to welcome you all for joining us tonight. Once I make my quick announcements, I will hand things over to our friends at the African American Writers Alliance. I am so thankful for their partnership on this program, and want to recognize the incredible work AAWA has done building Adding this program series for the library's summer of learning program. If you'd like to learn more about the summer of learning, please visit our website at [www.spl.org/summeroflearning](http://www.spl.org/summeroflearning). I also want to take a moment to recognize that we are on indigenous lands, The traditional and unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples, specifically the Duwamish People. Before we get started. I also want to let you know that I will drop in a link to a really quick survey. We'd like you to fill out after the program. So I'll drop that into the links, probably at the beginning of the program, and then it again at the end, Just so you don't forget, we'd love to hear your feedback. I would also like to thank the Seattle Public Library Foundation and their donors for their generous support of the summer of learning and programs like these. And with that, I would like to now hand it over to Noni Ervin from the African American Writers Alliance. Thank you and have a great program. Thank you.

### 00:01:45 Noni Ervin

Thank you, Amy. My name is Noni Ervin. I am a proud member of the African American Writers Alliance We are today going to be doing some storytelling Some question and answer, and some Open Mic sharing. First, I'd like to introduce one of our charter members to share a little bit about our organization, Dr. Georgia McDade. Please share,

### 00:02:08 Dr. Georgia McDade

Good evening everyone. And thank you so much for joining us. I am very happy. Whenever I see an audience, The founder of the African American Writers Alliance was Randee Eddins. Randee grew up in California, and she came here as a young adult. And in California, She had been a member of a number of writing groups with African-Americans in them. She came here, and she could find no such group. So she decided that she would begin a group. She put an ad in the Seattle Times, and in February 1991 we had our first meeting. And we are still meeting. The only requirement is that one be of African-American descent. We accept people who have never written anything. We accept people who have published, published, Well, published widely. And our goal is to have as many people as

possible tell their stories, Because all of us have stories worth sharing. I tell anybody don't worry about how you write, Just write it. You can always find someone to say, help you make it grammatically correct. But nobody can tell what happened to you, but you. So sit back and relax. Listen to some of us tell some of those stories tonight. And again, thank you for coming.

**00:03:43 Noni Ervin**

Thank you, Dr. Mcdade. Our first story teller will be Gaylloyd Sissón.

**00:03:51 Gaylloyd Sissón**

Hello everyone.

**00:03:52 Noni Ervin**

Gaylloyd Sissón writes daily in temperate Western Washington, where he lives with his wife. Kathleen, In addition to being active in AAWA or African-American Writers Alliance, he participates in Renton writers, Puyallup writers, groups and Pacific Northwest writers association. He retired from a 34-year career in education, teaching kindergarten through Community College. Since his teens, Gaylloyd has penned memoirs and poems in private journals. His writing has appeared in the Plant Amnesty newsletter, University of Washington's Voice, and Sacramento's Poet. An avid hiker, yoga participant and Fairweather cyclist, he survives Puget Sound's rainy season by reading good books, playing piano and flute and drinking plenty of black coffee while eating dark chocolate, A passionate Gardener. He has been featured in Vegetable Gardens and Urban Farms magazine. He devotes much of his time to freelance writing, photography, travel both foreign and domestic. Publications include Controlling The Dams. Mr. Sissón.

**00:05:06 Gaylloyd Sissón**

Hello, it's my pleasure to be here. And this story that I'm going to write is titled My first Cooking Lessons. Along with learning how to cook from my parents, I also learned how they resolve their disputes. Before they met, they were professional chefs and their dishes taste, delicious. All parents argue about something mine debated over different cooking methods. When my mother fixed dinner, She uses less cookware than my father. She prided herself on using only a few pots, She cooked potatoes and greens in one pot. When the potatoes are soft, she'd remove them and mash them. She roasted the chicken in the second pot. Over in the second pot, in the oven pan, Dad used every pot and pan in the kitchen when he cooked. He'd use one pot to boil the potatoes and another to rinse them. Then he'd spoon them in a baking dish and brown them in the oven, The greens and diced onions were boiled with slices of salt pork and just enough water to create pot liquor. He'd cut up the chicken, shook it in a brown paper bag with flour and spices and fried the pieces, browning them first, Then roasting them. Mom made gravy from the drippings of the chicken baking pan. She would thicken the liquid with corn starch. In the skillet. Dad fried the chicken. He'd brown the flour mixture from the brown paper bag. He stirred the drippings from the chicken roasting pan, then add water. Because I was small. I sat on a stool while I washed all the pots, pans and dishes. Dad's Navy chef and steward profession demanded a service away from home for weeks on end. While he was out at Sea. Mom stayed home with my five brothers and me. So she did all the meals with help from us Kids as we were able to. Dad took over the kitchen When he came home from holidays telling us I'm giving

your mother a break. Mom gladly designated him Head Chef for our family of eight. He created the menus, always a soup to nuts affair. His meals were Feasts, both for special celebrations and for everyday affairs. At the dinner table our parents sat at the end, and we kids sat three on each side. A buffet table with all the prepared foods sat along dad. Beef broth or onion soup began the meal followed by a lettuce, tomato, cucumber, and olive salad, garnished with nasturtium flowers. Next, he'd serve Black Eyed Peas, turnips and collard greens with sliced turnips, mashed potatoes and gravy. The main course was a huge hog's head on a platter, ready to be sliced. I couldn't help but stare back at the hog's eyes looking directly at me. It's long snout raised above the open mouth stuffed with an apple. Although it looked like the hog was smiling, I felt sorry for the poor animal and lost my appetite. Dad relished fried chicken and rabbits. He grew up on a farm in rural Mississippi, where they raise their own food. So in our San Diego backyard, we raised rabbits and chickens. He taught us each step in the preparation. Beginning was skinning the rabbits and plucking the chickens. After a while, I lost my revulsion about killing and eating these animals. He showed me how to skin a rabbit by cutting around its paws with a knife. Dad separated the skin around the head and used scissors to cut from beneath the chin down the belly. When you remove the furry skin from the body, it was like taking off tights and leaving the rabbit naked. For dinner, daddy killed a few chickens. He had us carefully dunk it in boiling water that loosens the feathers, making them easy to pull off. After I plucked my first chicken, I put it on a cutting board on the sink. With the knife I cut from the high end to the front past the stomach. He insisted I pull a breast open, stick my hand inside, and remove the innards that included the gizzards, liver and heart. I chop these giblets to put them in the gravy. Next, I cut up the chicken breasts apart, dried them on a paper towel, placed them in a brown paper bag, and shook them to coat them with my father's favorite mixture of flour, Cayenne, black pepper and salt. Dad put the breaded pieces in a sieve, and eased the batch into the heated oil in the deep fryer on the stove. The popping oil sounds blended with the lively banter and laughter of our family and neighbors visiting as dad entertained us with stories of his Mississippi upbringing. The kitchen buzzed with excitement over the thoughts of tasting the mouth-watering food. With his white chef's apron wrapped around his cylinder frame ... [inaudible] ... more pieces of raw chicken. Two of my younger siblings, Michael and Philip, stood on the bench next to the stove, watching the chicken sizzle. Michael asked, "Daddy, is that oil hot?" Seriously, turning around dad said, "stick your hand in there and see for yourself." I'd laugh, sat on the chair and watched Michael's reaction. He stared quietly at the bubbling oil. Philip leaned in for a better look and Michael grabbed his hand and dunked it in the deep fryer. Phillip's piercing screams filled the kitchen. He held his glistening hands to his chest and fell to the floor wailing. Dad spun around his face flush. He yanked Michael off the bench and dangled him by the ankles above the deep fryer. "Boy, I oughtta stick your head in there." Stunned, I watched my brother squirm upside down. Dad lifted Michael away, sat him on the floor and put Philip on his lap. "My God," Mom said, "look at his hands." She ran from the kitchen yelling over her shoulder, "Gayloyd, get me a bowl of cold water." She hurried back with cocoa butter and a towel. Philip screamed when she submerged his hand in the water and whimpered as she dressed his wound. Dad rushed him to the hospital. Four hours later, they returned Phillip's hand bandaged in thick gauze. I tried to imagine how my brother's hand looked under the layered wrappings. I was sure it would stick to his hand and maybe pull the burned skin away when he changed. That accident was the climax of one of my first cooking lessons. True story. Thank you.

**00:13:55 Noni Ervin**

Oh my. Thank you. Gaylloyd. Alright, we are going to hear from our next Storyteller, who is a guest of ours, a guest to AAWA, a community youth poet, Miss Harlem Adams. Let's see if I can put you in here. Harlem is a WeAPP Scholar. WeAPP stands for We Act Present Perform. They are teaching young scholars to speak with purpose. And they've been doing that since 2012. This Harlem is entering seventh grade at Orchid K-8. She likes writing, and plays and is learning guitar and piano. Harlem. Thank you for joining us.

**00:14:48 Harlem Adams**

No problem. I wrote a story just about me going to Puerto Rico, which is very special for me. And it was really hard coming up with the story or coming up with what to write, because I was like, what should I write about? I usually write about like, social issues and stuff. And now I write about something more lighthearted. So I really like this story. Traveling. By Google's definition going or being transported from place to place. Since a kid I have always traveled with my dad and mom. I was incredibly lucky to have the chance to travel at such an early age. This past spring, I had the amazing chance to go to Puerto Rico for the second time. The first time I visited this beautiful Island was when I was a year old. So my mom surprised me with this wonderful trip to Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico is personal to me, because my dad is Puerto Rican, and I learned so much about my culture and language. I was astonished by the landscapes, the museum, and the food was absolutely delicious. When I got off the plane, it was phenomenal. The trees, the towns are so indulging. We went back to the hotel, and I was surprised, because I saw frogs in the pond where our hotel was located. Honestly. At that point, I was in love. After a while, we went to San Juan, and I had the most delicious ice cream. I got a cocoa chocolate with brownie chunks, and my sister got strawberry with chunks of said fruit. Finally, my mom got some peanut coffee ice cream. After that, we saw the church crows, then colorful hanging kites. Then we walked around the local houses around San Juan. There was so many cats in the street. It's like everyone on the block owned one. It was the cutest site. After we walked for hours, we finally went back to the hotel. And there was a Live Mariachi band in the lounge playing beautiful songs. The next day we landed at the pool and ate tasty food. Then we walked to the beach where the sand was white, and the water was clear as day. It was Heaven on Earth. Me and my mother thought it would be a clever idea for me and her to have a mom and mother day. While my sister was with my mom's best friend and her younger kids. Me, my mom took an Uber back to San Juan and went to an old Palace. The Palace was so huge. We walked for about three miles. We also visited where they kept prisoners. We learn so much about the history and cool things about Puerto Rico. I even got to speak a little Spanish to the guides. Apart from the amazing Palace. There was such a big field with tons of kids playing with flying kites. It was so pretty seeing all the bright colors in the sky. After that, we got some authentic Puerto Rican food. I ordered beans and rice. This was one of the best beans and rice I've ever had. For drink. I got a virgin piña colada, which was refreshing. And finally, the last day was dedicated to taking it all in amazing landscapes and the water. We left to the airport, sadly, not looking forward to going back to rainy Seattle. At last. We had to leave, though. So we hopped on the plane and went back home to our family and friends. If you're ever looking forward to travel somewhere, I definitely recommend the beautiful culture this island called Puerto Rico. Thank you.

**00:18:26 Noni Ervin**

Wonderful Harlem. Thank you so much. I'm I'm wanting to get in on some of that food for sure. All right, Our next Storyteller is Miss Jacqueline Ware. Jaye Ware was born and raised in the Pacific Northwest poet spoken word artist and recent playwright. She is drawn to material that Taps into social justice and Injustice issues. With the heart for children and seniors. Jay writes stories and prose geared toward their age range. Access to Jaye's children videos can be found on YouTube; Pop up Time, Children's Poetry and Prose. She is a member artist with the 4Culture Touring Arts Roster and has a short "on location" staged play titled, Madison Park Bench; located on YouTube, Menrva Labs. She has performed at Town Hall, libraries, museums, on Orcas and Vashon Island, schools, bookstores, and art galleries. Jaye says "Spread honesty liberally." Miss Jaye.

**00:19:37 Jacqueline Ware**

Thank you. So I'm just going to tell you right off the top of my head, I didn't even write it down about some of the experiences I had growing up in Tacoma, Tacoma, Washington, right down the street. So up until I was in the fourth grade, I was raised in a neighborhood where and I'm going to use the language we used at the time. There were whites, Caucasian whites, African American blacks, indigenous people, Indians, they were called Indians. So we all grew up together. It was wonderful. Remember I said up until I was in the fourth grade. And so I don't recall at that time at that age range. I don't recall racism, bigotry, Prejudice, only what I saw on television, And I never wanted to go to the South because of what I saw on television, And I could not understand for the life of me why people couldn't get along, why there was so much conflict and so much fighting why there were dogs and hoses And why they were lynchings and hangings. It was just mind boggling to me. Why the schools were separate, like black kids were in certain schools and couldn't go to school with white kids? Because I did. I went to school with white kids. I went to school with Native Americans. So my mother's family was from Arkansas, and I've never understood my father, and my mother are both deceased. I never understood why they never wanted to talk about the South. Never wanted to talk about what they endured, what they went through, the good, bad, The ugly never wanted to discuss it. My father is half Native American. And so I never Met my grandmother, his mother, She died when she was really young, but my father was super quiet. And as I said, we were raised around Native Americans. The Puyallup tribe. My father was very, very quiet, but he was extremely talented. But when I was little, I thought every father did what he did. So my father could knit; my father could crochet. He taught himself how to play the piano. He could cook. He could carve. He was a whittler. He made our purses. He made some of our shoes that we would not wear, but he could make them. So he worked with a leather. He canned the food. And he was not the disciplinarian. So my mother was the disciplinarian, and she was quite the disciplinarian. So regarding my father, it was just interesting to me that, as I mentioned before, we thought all fathers did that did the same thing that he did. I had an uncle that also lived in the neighborhood and Tacoma. And he was also a very gifted, very talented. My father could, and he did too. He could take things apart. He would take the television apart so you can figure out how to put it back together, Figure out how it worked, and he could do it and put it back together. He could fix virtually anything. And so, you know, I had a brother that ended up with some of the same skills and abilities that he did. I not me, I really wish I had, but unfortunately, I was not gifted with those types of skills and talents and abilities. So that was my dad, really quiet. And he would be sitting down whittling a wood, and I have in my home. Now, You know,

as I got older, he passed away. And as I got older, we kept a few of his things, but not very many, because he didn't seem to take a lot of interest in what he did, because it was just natural for him to do it. So I do have a totem pole that he made. I have a couple of tables that he made, and in there They're perfect. My grandmother also, and I'm going to read a story about grandmother's in a minute. This is a story that I wrote. This is not about my grandmother, but It's about a grandmother and her grandbaby. So my grandmother was also part native American. She had long gray and white hair. So, you know, what I remember from My grandmother is when my grandmother was a grandmother, I don't remember anything young about her. So my grandmother could sew. Oh my God, Now we're not talking about a sewing machine. But when I was young, I did kind of took that stuff for granted. So I, you know, I encourage everyone, you know if your grandparents are around, your parents are around. There's things that you want to know. Things that you've thought about would be interesting to know would be beneficial to you. Do it now. Do it now. Do it now. So anyway, my grandmother could really, really sew, and I have an apron that she made, because I just couldn't believe she made that apron by hand. Oh my god it's perfect, absolutely Perfect. All the stitching is Perfect. So anyway, and my grandmother loved to cook. And one thing that I hated, and I, you know, I didn't want to be rude or disrespectful or anything. But I hate dumplings. I hate dumplings to this day. And so my grandmother would make dumplings. And of course, I'm doing everything I can to get around the dumpling. I like anything wet like that, or she would make hot water cornbread. And a lot of people like hot water cornbread, I don't. I don't like hot water cornbread. So I just don't like it all mushee inside. And so then I would just kind of eat around the outside, the edges kind of crunchy and things like that. But this is one thing that I wanted to tell you about my father. I was talking about my grandmother, but about my father, who was so incredibly gifted. But I Also said that he was really, really quiet. And so he would tell us a little thing, Just little little things about when he was growing up and what they had his mother had when he was really small, was some sort of a statute, the bust of a woman, and they would I don't know why. And we didn't ask the question, but they would sometimes it when you use that as a way to comfort themselves. So with that breast of that woman, they would use that as to actually, as a suckling. It was really fascinating. So now you wonder "well, if my dad does all of that, what did my mother do?" My mother cooked, And she was the disciplinarian, as I said, and she also made the best Sweet potato pies. I'm like, who does that? I can't make them like her, even though I've tried. And it takes a little extra work and effort to do that. But her sweet potato pies were so light and Airy. And the way she whipped the egg white, that egg white, if you cook it, just right in the the sweet potato pie. When you cut a slice, it would have that line of egg white going through. It's just really, really, really fascinating. So, yeah, She was the disciplinarian. They're from Arkansas. I was in my mother's a tummy when we came to the state of Washington. Now about grandparents. I think grandparents are hugely important. If they can be available in your life, They are hugely important because they are part of your upbringing and your discipline, and just helping you understand yourself better. And just being an integral part of that family pic. Grandparents are invaluable. With that. I'm going to tell you a story that I wrote. So that's about my family. There's a lot more I could tell you, but i'm gonna leave it at that. Oh yeah, Yeah, What am I talking about? All right, I said up until the fourth grade. So we moved... we were in a car accident. And my father got some money. Of course, if he had not been black, his lawyer, I found out later, told him I could have got you a million dollars. Okay, Well, now I'm learning about some racism right there. So anyway, he got some money, and we moved to a different neighborhood. Now it wasn't that far away, but it was just

us in this neighborhood. So you talk about culture shock. It was culture shock. But because up until the fourth grade, I had been raised in a very integrated neighborhood. I was very confident in myself. I felt really comfortable when I went into that classroom, and all eyes are on me. I thought, why are they looking at me like I'm different? Like I'm looking at you like you're really different. And the things you don't know was incredible to me. But I had a wonderful teacher. Some things went on, you know, some of the kids that use that n-word. And I had not been called that n-word until I came to this neighborhood. And my mother went to that school. And that was back in the day when the teacher and the principal and the parents got together to resolve conflicts among the children. I don't know why they don't do that today, but they did it back then. And that child never called me the n-word again. As a matter of fact, we became friends, and I'd beat the mess out of him in ping-pong. So here... here is a story that I wrote called Grandbaby and Me, because I'm running out of time. It's called Grandbaby and Me Imaginary Friend. And I do a series of grandbaby and me. So here we go. Real quick Nana hollered from the kitchen for her grandbaby to come on downstairs. She was making up a batch of her favorite chocolate chip cookies with walnuts and wheat germ, Not hearing the soft pounding of a small feet stumping down hard on each step. Nana called out one more time from the bottom of the stairs, "Child. didn't you

### **00:30:33 Jacqueline Ware**

hear me calling you? Come on down here and help your nana make these cookies." She hears the bedroom door open and her grandbaby shouts, "Nana, I got company! We're busy playing." The door slammed shut. "Oh no, he didn't just slam my door shut," thought Nana. She eyed the stairs wearily. Over the years, she must have climbed them a thousand times. But today her knees were not in the mood. But no child of hers or a grandbaby was going to be acting sassy, slamming doors in her house. So she slowly started walking up The steps. One step at a time, holding onto the banister for support. Finally reaching the top of the landing, Nana stood next to the guest bedroom door, trying to catch her breath. She could hear talking coming from the other side of the door. "Now I know no one else can possibly be in that room," whispered Nana under her breath. After moment Nana's irritation and desire to set that record straight about slamming doors subsided. It occurred to her what was going on, and she chuckled, "Oh that grandbaby of mine." She turns the knob and quietly opens the door. Peering inside she looked around the room. His Power Rangers and dinosaurs were strewn all over the floor. He has so many toys at Nana's house. Her sweet, sweet grandbaby was sitting cross-legged with his back hunched over on the bed, looking hard at something in his hand. She could hear his muffled crying. "What is wrong, baby? What you crying about?" Nana said in a tender voice. "Nana," he said, rubbing his eyes. "I don't like her anymore. She's being mean and stubborn." "She is?" replied Nana. "Well, maybe she's just tired and has a lot on her mind." "No, Nana! No, she's sounding frustrating." He started crying again. "Oh, honey," Nana said, rubbing his back. "I doubt that. Everyone wants a friend just like you." "Well she said I was 'tittle to my opinion. She kept saying that to me, I was 'tittle my opinion." "Well," Nana replied, "maybe she just needs time out. Let's leave her here for a while, and we'll go finish making our cookies. Sometimes we all just need a short break." "Ok, Nana. She might act better when she smells those cookies. Siri Siri, You stay here. And you think about how you would been acting sassy." We walk out and gently close the door. That is the end of that story. Thank you so much. Thank you for listening.

### **00:33:45 Noni Ervin**

Thank you, Miss Jaye. Thank you. Our next Storyteller is Helen J. Collier. Helen Collier, prolific writer of many different genres says writing has been in her spirit since her mother placed a pencil in her left hand and told her, "God made you a left-handed writer for a reason; it's up to you to share with the world what that reason is." A native of Illinois, she now resides in Auburn, Washington, and has several Publications, including The Last Judgement, Looking for Trouble, My Oprah and Recreating the Legacy, The trilogy series, which includes Miss Anna and the Tears From The Healing Tree, the Two Worlds of Miss Anna, Miss Anna and the Promise Keeper, And recently The Unexpected with its sequel, The Unexpected: 2020 the Year When the Face of America Changed. Miss Helen.

### **00:34:51 Helen Collier**

Good evening. I am thrilled to be here with you this evening. And as she says, my name is Helen Collier. I am known as a Storyteller. This is a person who witnesses or lived everyday life events and create stories from what I see or hear. Growing up as a child, I can remember that I never got the answers to the questions that I needed from the adults around me. So this is my response, which I have put in my book, The Unexpected 2020 When The Face of America Changed. And this is the question that was asked and wanted to see the answer for love just a second here. Now, why won't they answer my questions? So I said, Wondering why. I felt my mother's hand tight around mine as we walked with Miss Jenny to the bus stop, Next to it stood a tall grey stone building. I was forbidden to enter. I liked to read books as well as any eight-year-old. Why was the library forbidden to me? Across the street I watched children my size plan on swings are sliding down slides. Their blonde and brown hair flying in the air. My hair didn't fly, but I sure did like to slide and swing. Why couldn't I go play in the park with them while we waited for the bus? My mother talked non-stop to her friend, paying me no mind until a burly white man walked towards us. Mom caught my hand quickly, Pulling me with her as she and Miss Jenny stepped into the streets. "Why," I wondered, "did that man have to take up all of the sidewalk?" My mother explained to her friend about having to always you come in to her job through the back door when she could have so easily walked through the front door. As they continued their conversation paying no mind to me, I eased my hand from my mother's seeing the white and colored water fountain behind us. We looked at each other. As I pointed to the colored water fountain. She smiled and turned back to talk to her friend as I skipped over to the fountain and took a drink. Turning back. I saw that Mom was not looking. Quick as a wink I tiptoed over and took a quick sip from the white water fountain. Smiling, I skipped back and took my mother's hand as we and some of the white kids playing in the park boarded the bus with our parents. As Mom, Miss Jenny and I took a seat in the last row Ugh of the bus, I began to wonder. "Why was I not allowed to drink from the whites-only water fountain when they both tasted the same?" And now I'm going to share with you another chapter in my book, My Oprah and Recreating the Legacy. And this is chapter 4 for Mrs. Johnnie Bea , an 86 year old woman has been hospitalized when she broke her hip, and she gets an unexpected visit from a homeless old man. Once the word got around the Mrs. Johnnie Bea have been hospitalized, her semi-private room was changed into a private suite. Friends came to see her from near and far. So many flowers arrived, that Mrs. Johnnie Bea complained that she felt like she was attending her own funeral. She, however, never let on how proud she was of about the fuss being made over her. And that involved her church friends, spending half the day. The Muslims ladies you work with alongside on Sundays feeding the homeless people came in to see her. Even her

Native American and Spanish speaking friends, who sometimes volunteered at the safe place came in. One evening after Mrs. Johnnie Bea had been in the hospital for about three weeks, the nurse came in and told her a little creepy thing called a man was outside, waiting to see her. Mrs. Johnnie Bea begged for them to let him in. Not able to recognize him, she put on her glasses to see her guest better. Still not recognizing him, she took her glasses off and slowly placed them on again. At first, she still did not know who the little fellow was. He stood 5 feet. Miss Johnnie Bea knew because he was shorter than her. His foot long, white beard matched a crop of woolly white hair on his head. He smell like someone has sprayed him with Lysol after giving him a good cleaning, because he looked nothing like the filthy little critter begging for three servings of food before everyone else was fed. Most of the women refuse to serve until he was out of sight. He looked and smelled so bad. Now washed and scrubbed, he stood before her sparkling clean. Someone had given him a scrub suit to put on. He looked like some doctor about to go to surgery. As Miss Johnnie Bea grew in recognition, she leaned closer so that she can see him better. "My lord, if it ain't Little Willy. Come on over here man and tell me what you have to say for yourself." Not waiting for him to answer Miss Johnnie Bea continued her questioning. "For Christ's sake. How did you get down here?" Miss Johnnie Bea asked the little homeless fella that was always first in line to get her Saturday and Sunday morning breakfast. "Tell you the truth, Miss Johnnie Bea, I walked." "You walked 20 miles, Willie?" "Seemed more like 40 miles. But I wanted to see you." He began to scratch his head. "I had no idea them Nurses would make me bathe. That big, old ugly yellow sister just grabbed me by my collar. Yes, She did! Looked like a wrestler come asking me who I was looking for. When I gave her your name. She said, I had to bathe first. I tried to turn around and go back out the door. But that Rascal had the security cop to grab me by the collar and pull me into the shower room. She told him to tell me I wasn't getting out until I bathed coming in here stinking up her place. I had no other choice but to wash that stuff, that fool poured on me after ripping off my clothes. it made so many suds I had to scrub for an hour trying to get all those bubbles it caused. That fool didn't understand, I need that dirt to protect me when I'm out there in that cold." Again He scratched his head, Miss Johnnie Bea shook her head, laughing as she thought again about how hard it was to get the women to issue out food to him, smelling like he did. He had not bathed since she had known him. For five years he always stood first in line to be fed. Little Willie was one of the reasons she and Elizabeth had hit it off So well. Elizabeth had taken off her three five carat diamonds and served Little Willie, never letting on to her or him that he smelled any different than anyone else coming to be fed. "Now woman. I'm sure glad to see you. And you sure look nice." "It is good to know you were thinking about Miss Johnnie Bea. I am going to give you a bus coin so you can get back to the shelter in the village. 20 miles is too Far for you to walk. When you get there. Tell Betsy, I say to let you stay in the shelter. No, no. On the other hand, I'll call her myself. I don't want you sleeping outside all cleaned up." "I don't know what they did with my clothes, gave me these hospital rags." "Go down to the Sallie house and get you some clothes more to your liking Little Willie. You know, they will give them to you free of charge." Miss Johnnie Bea looked at the blue hospital scrubs He had been given. "I'm going to do just that, Miss Johnnie Bea. You always give me the best advice. You know them woman, you sent to take your place, Don't take time to spend a minute talking to a body. They wear them long, white aprons have their heads tied up, giving out food without saying a word." "Who are these Women?" Miss Johnnie Bea asked. "That white woman named [inaudible] sound like that's what she said her name was told me I couldn't get it any more than two servings, because other people had to eat. I told her Miss

Johnnie Bea always gave me three." "Where was Elizabeth?" Miss Johnnie Bea asked still looking at him amazed at his present appearance. "That's what I asked. They told me she was head of operations. Whatever that is. Seems like they got some money to set up a blood pressure and a mental health screening hub." "They did get it going? Good for them. Have you had your blood pressure checked?" Now That is started Little Willie, Miss Johnny be asked him as he took a seat beside her bed. They told us we had to have a bath within two days before we could come in that Hut, They got set up." Little Willie and Miss Johnny be looked at each other sarcastically. Finally, she said, "Willie, you go on in there tomorrow and get your blood pressure checked. Elizabeth and I worked hard to get that Foundation funding to help pay for that program. Your health is as important as any other American in this country. Don't forget that." "Yes, ma'am, I guess I sad, since you work so hard to have it for us. Anyway, that fancy white girl told me She was making sure everything got done like you wanted it. Is that what she said to me?" "Willie, she is not white. She is one of our own. Black, If not in color, in her heart. She is one of us." "Huh?" Little Willie says, scratching his head as he thought about what she told him. "You could have fooled me. That one named Chilly. She told me, I had to wait till all the others were fed, Then come back for thirds. Where is Miss Johnnie Bea?" I asked her. "That's when they told me you were in here." "Did you go back after Everyone was served, Willie?" "They had twice as many people coming because they had slices of apple pie. Miss Johnnie Bea, folks was coming, I know had to live somewhere else other than the streets. There were too many of them when they heard that they were going to get not only beans, but chicken and pie as well, the whole village showed up. They didn't finish up until way after 4 o'clock. Ain't no way I could stand there alone. When those two left a pregnant girl came. You remember the one that was with your nephew that day in the village. She and a short peanut colored woman started to serve." "You must mean that little Joyce, my nephew's wife and Susan my girl that works for the juvenile center, Little Willie." "Yeah, must have been them. Anyway, I stayed around until Teresa and Elsie came back by then had got my third serving." "My Oprah, Little Willie, I'm glad you came by to see about poor Miss Johnnie Bea. I broke my hip because I didn't take care of business Like I should have. Opportunities came and went, and I overlooked them. Now I am paying dearly for it. I feel proud you cared enough to come and see about me." Little Willie got up from his seat and scratched his head. "I'm glad you're no worse off, Miss Johnnie Bea. Of course. I would be glad when you come back. Those women are too sassy. Now, what good is two servings when you have grown accustomed to getting three?" "Head on there, Willie, before it gets dark?" As she said it Miss Johnnie Bea had to smile as she reminded herself that Little Willie lived on the streets slept under bridges at night, If not on the doorsteps of someone's establishment. "Here, Take this bus token and catch the bus out front, back to the Village," Miss Johnnie Bea said, giving Little Willie one of the first token She always carried in her purse just for such emergencies. "I'll talk to them the next time they come. Course, I can't promise they will do no better because they got their own minds on how they want to do. And if they're feeding as many people as you say are coming, there just might not be enough." "Yeah, I had better go so I can get my shoes. They made me leave outside the door. Somebody might take them. I've had them all, but 10 years, They feel like home to me." Little Willie then walked towards the door. Stopping, he turned around, "Miss Johnnie Bea, I get to tell others I saw you and you're coming back to us. Okay?" "Yes, Willie. you tell them for me that Miss Johnnie Bea is alright, and she will be back when this old hips gets better." Little Willie smiled, showing the through ill kept teeth in his mouth, then turned and walked out the door, saying more to himself that her, "I had better hurry and get my

shoes, or someone'll walk off with them." Mrs Johnnie Bea shook her head and smiled after making the call she dimmed the lights, sliding under her covers while thinking to herself, her father's legacy was well on its way. Thank you very much.

**00:48:54 Noni Ervin**

Wow, Ms Helen, you broke me down, I don't know [inaudible]. That was wonderful. Thank you. All right, Let me let me shift gears here. Oh, okay. Our next Storyteller is none other than Dr. Georgia, Stewart McDade. Georgia McDade loves reading and writing. She grew up writing and producing plays for the youngsters in her neighborhood and collaborated with church youth to write plays for special occasions. As a charter member of the African-American Writers' Alliance, she began reading her stories in public in 1991. She credits the group with making her write poetry. For a number of years, she has written poems inspired by artists at such sites as Gallery 110, Seattle Art Museum, Columbia City Gallery, and Onyx Fine Arts Collective. For several years Georgia wrote for Pacific Newspapers, especially the South District Journal. She continues to write reviews and interviews for Community radio stations as she is working on two biographies and poetry. Copies of her four volumes of poetry called "Outside the Cave" and her first collection of prose "Observation and Revelations: Stories, Sketches, and Essays" are available on her website. And at that you can find on our AAWA website under her author page. Dr. McDade.

**00:50:32 Dr. Georgia McDade**

Hello again, everybody. And again, again, Thank you so much for coming. I have a funny story. It's funny, you're now going to happen, but I think it's worth sharing. And it is indeed about family. All the women in my family are good cooks. I don't think we thought of ourselves as being good cooks. We just cook. But testimonies from people who've been at our table make us believe, yeah, we must be good cooks, especially when it comes to Holiday dinners. All of us have specialties. One sister's is roast. Oh God, nobody does the roasts like chicken. Another one has a special kind of cake, and she always makes the dressing. And then another sister makes a different kind of cake. And her potato salad is in a class all by itself. And one sister makes potato pies and macaroni and cheese, shrimp creole. And I'm known for my homemade ice cream and candied yam and bread pudding. Yeah, I like sweet stuff. Okay? Oh, and I can't forget the better than sex cake. Everybody knows about that cake. Another one of my specialties is gumbo. Now, although I grew up in Louisiana, I did not grow up eating gumbo. Louisiana is like Washington in that, you know, how we say Eastern Washington and Western Washington could be two different states. Well, Southern Louisiana and Northern Louisiana could be two different states, because they are so very different. So I had my first gumbo when I came to Seattle. I had never had gumbo. In college, and I loved it. Not too much later. I had some more gumbo, and I loved that too. By the third time I had gumbo, I had made up my mind. I am going to make this gumbo. So I got recipes from my then mother-in-law and her daughter and a friend. And I was just very happy when I had people over and they enjoyed my gumbo, I was a pro. Okay, then one of my sisters, she'll shall remain nameless to protect the innocent and because of her telling of this story will be very different from my telling of the story. Okay, I was so proud that she asked for my recipe, and she was having dinner. Everybody was coming over. I was excited. I looked forward to having someone use my recipe. So my recipe is about 3/4 of a page long. I use backs and necks. No thighs for me. It's too thick. No wings, you know, the backs and the necks can absorbed the liquid in a

way that the thighs the legs can't. And it's hard to find chicken parts, chicken backs and necks. But I will not make gumbo unless I have them. I have to have sausages from Alberto's. Any old sausage won't do. You know, the hotter the sausage, the hotter the gumbo. And Alberto's hot links are seasoned Like none other I've ever had. I always put okra in my gumbo, And this okra is always Frozen. Do you get the idea? I mean, I don't play when I fix gumbo. I always put shrimp in mine and raw shrimp is better than cooked shrimp. And I always use crab, crab that's in the shell. And honestly, I have never had gumbo that had too much shrimp, too many crab legs. I just I just have to have it. And then I fix the roux. And, you know, if you mess up the roux, you have to start over. You cannot save the roux, okay. But I know how to make it in my head. Just start over, and then I go into detail about how you're supposed to do this too. I mean, it was just really you don't rush the gumbo. You have to take your time. And I add a Zatarain pouch, I'm not even sure of all the spices in that pouch. I just know that I won't make gumbo unless I have it. I can find it here occassionally. But my sister who lives in Louisiana will mail me boxes of it when I'm out. Anyway, my sister got this recipe, and I was just very excited that she was going to be fixing this. I just couldn't, I couldn't wait. Finally, the night came, and everybody showed up. I was a little surprised because I couldn't smell the gumbo. You know, I walked in and thought Okay? So I thought, okay, she probably made something else, but I just I forgot about it. Nothing makes me forget everything like the nieces and nephews. I always call them the little people. So I was fooling around with the little people, and I was disappointed because for more than two weeks, I had been looking forward to the gumbo. But I hadn't told anybody that. I was just happy to be with my family. And then we were invited to serve ourselves, and it was supposed to be gumbo. And I looked in that pot, and I wondered what had happened. And, you know, you can't say anything when people do these kinds of things. But this was not my gumbo. I couldn't help wondering what had gone wrong. There was no crab. The crab in its shell has to be in the gumbo, but there was no crab. No shells. I learned later that she had used crab in the can, because crab in the shell was too expensive. The vegetables I was accustomed to seeing. I did not see. Of course, I ate knowing she had not used my recipe. She had used that recipe definitely from someone else. But I didn't show my disappointment. I was nice. I ate the gumbo. We went about visiting, teasing, listening, playing with the youngsters, listening. I overheard my sister telling a friend that I had not given her my real recipe. Oh my God, I was appalled. I had given her the recipe. I never understand why people won't share their recipes. After all, we aren't Mrs Fields. So if you ask me for a recipe, I will give you the recipe. But she had altered my recipe beyond recognition, telling someone I hadn't given her the recipe really hurt my feelings. But I'm a big sister, so I went about my business. I know I wouldn't have said anything about that Gumbo if I hadn't heard that comment. But that comment really hurt my feelings. When everyone was gone, I couldn't wait to ask her what had happened. I mentioned there was no crab, and that's when she told me that the canned crab was less expensive. I told her I'd never prepared gumbo without crab in the shell, and I replied that it shouldn't have made that much of a difference. Although now I would never say that to anybody. I really thought that. A long talk led her to confess that she had used canned okra. If you know anything about okra, you know, the canned okra would be nothing like the frozen okra. Okay, That she said nothing. This is what she told me. Nothing needs green onions AND yellow onions, or that much onion. So she cut the onion, and she said, my recipe just had too much of everything in it. She she got rid of the green peppers and "parsley," said she, "who needs parsley?" And there would you believe there were no shrimp? Too expensive. The conversation sort of trailed off. Both of us, I

believe a bit sad. For decades, I've used this story to explain the process, analysis, composition. All students are required to writing comp 101. If you do not follow the directions, you will not get the results. From that point any time I give a person a recipe, I'll insert little sentences, like in my bread pudding. I said, now, if you don't use Hoagies, it's not going to taste like mine. I make my own extract. If you don't make your extract, it's not going to taste like mine. And I haven't had anybody complain about a recipe since. I think some of them don't fix it. But at least I learned a lot from that. And I'm glad I learned to give people reasons for doing these things. And now I admit, my sister makes gumbo, and it is very good. Of course. It's not as good as mine, but it's very good. Very good. Thank you.

**01:00:22 Dr. Georgia McDade**

My second story is very short. And I've told it number times, but I don't think I've ever had it recorded, and I haven't always put all the parts in it. So I thought this was a good time to tell this story. I had a hard time getting to college. Oh, I was a good student. I was valedictorian, actually, But I didn't have any money. And although I got a scholarship and they do that today too, nobody said anything about how I would get the money to get from my house to the school. And in this instance, I needed \$25 to send in with the application, and I didn't have \$25. I wasn't about to ask my mom. My mom made three dollars and fifty cents a day, And so often, when I needed something I didn't tell her about it. But I was determined to go to college, and I had gotten a hundred dollars scholarship from a civic organization of black women in Monroe. And I decided to go and ask this woman, who didn't live too far from me. If I could have the \$100. And she said, oh no, you can't get that until September. And I explained to her, I thought, really well, that I had to have the \$25 now, or I wouldn't be able to go in September. She said, no, I can't give it to you. And I spent a few days thinking about it. I went back to this woman, and she said, no, I can't do that. I have to have a meeting, and I was terrified it would be too late. But anyway, they had this meeting, and she called me and she said they would give me the \$25 not 100, 25. I wouldn't get to 75 until I was actually on the campus. So I was satisfied. One of my best friends, we met in first grade, had told me that her dad would take us to college. So that was good for me, because I had worked during the summer, and I had saved the money I had. Now, this is proof I didn't know too much about traveling, I'd saved \$5 to go to Southern University, And about two days before we were supposed to leave. My friend said, her dad said, oh, I'm not taking you to school. Now he had taken seven or eight of her siblings, So she had no reason to believe that he wouldn't take her. But she told me, and she said, well, we can go together on the bus, And I looked at the little money I had. And as I said, I had five dollars after I came up with the money for this ticket, but it worked out. It worked out. A lot of people who know me will agree that it worked out. And I've just always been so grateful that it did work out this way, because going to college is one of the biggest things I ever did. Oh, maybe 15 or so years ago, one of the ministers at our church said, she wanted to write a book on the names of God, And there are a lot of different names. I used to know how many, but I don't know anymore. But one I didn't learn about until late was Jehovah Jireh. I did not grow up knowing that term. And so when she asked me to choose one, I didn't think about it, I just wrote back Jehovah Jireh. And I chose that one, because it means god, the provider. And I know for a fact that God has provided for me. And I believe God always will provide for me, although I don't always act like it, okay. It was in Genesis when Abraham was about to kill Isaac, that the Lord provided a ram in the bushes. And so Abraham said, Jehovah Jireh. When I left Monroe, Louisiana,

all I had was that \$5. I had never been to Southern University. I didn't know that it was over 200 miles from Monroe, Louisiana. I was 17 years old. I had never been that far away from home. All I knew was I was going to college. And I knew I had to go to college. It was something that told me, I had to go to college. Okay, so I have my ticket. The summer before I graduated from high school, I participated in a program at Grambling College. It was a National Science Foundation program 45 students from nine states. They dubbed us high ability students. We took math, chemistry, physics and biology, and thought nothing of it. And I had a wonderful time. That was my first visit to a College. And that was one of the reasons that I love college. So I had an idea of what I needed, what I would need when I got to Southern University. So the little money I made, that's the way I spent it, buying things that I thought I would need. I was very glad to be leaving home. Well, when the Continental Trailways bus pulled into Baton Rouge, that's when I learned that Southern University is not in Baton Rouge. But it's in Scotlandville, quite a few miles from there. And the cost was \$7.50. Remember, I had five dollars, it was \$7 and 50 cents. As the provider would have it a taxi driver with a station wagon said he would take this many of us As he could to Southern, but two dollars and fifty cents. I still don't know how I got over there with my trunk, but I made it over there. And once we got to the campus that I just thought was beautiful there on the Mississippi River, I was told that I had to pay a dollar deposit for my room key. So that's \$3 and 50 cents, and I just paid. Then they told me I had to go to that line over there. I went to another line, And they told me, I had to pay a dollar deposit for the mailbox key. And now I'm down to 50 cents. And there was another line over there. And I'm thinking, what in the world am I going to do? All I could think was, please don't let there be anything else to pay for. And that line was A lot of young women who were standing over there, waiting to take all of us new young women to our room. So I was very, very happy. I was so happy that I will have the bed all to myself, because three of us had slept in the same bed. I would have a closet to myself, because a closet for me had been a nail on the back of the middle room door. Even then, I realized that God had provided me with what I needed, that God has provided me with what I need countless times. Sometimes I thank God immediately, then and there. Other times I thank God later, And sometimes I never know, or knew to thank God. I didn't stop to thank God. But I admit, and I want you to know, I'm better now. I thank God often. I know for a fact that he is indeed that God is indeed Jehovah Jireh, Our protector, and he gives me all I need, plus a number of extras. Thank you.

**01:08:41 Noni Ervin**

Thank you. Dr. McDade, wonderful. Well, I just want to say how wonderful this was with all of our storytellers, Lots of generations, all about family and friends [recording suddenly ends].