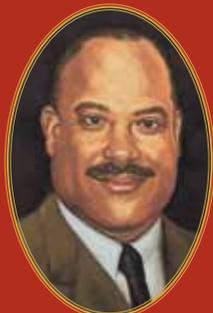


ABOUT KAREEM ABDUL-JABBAR



Dr. Henry T. Sampson



Dr. Mark Dean



Lloyd A. Hall



James E. West



Granville T. Woods

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Kareem Abdul-Jabbar is a celebrated athlete whose professional playing career spanned some twenty years. Fans and sportswriters throughout the world consider him to be the greatest basketball player of all time.

Since retiring as a player in 1989, Abdul-Jabbar has focused his energies on expansive, socially minded projects that encompass African-American history, social and racial justice, and foundation work, as well as numerous speaking engagements and appearances in a variety of media. He is also a best-selling author of several books.

As a college student, he was the star of the UCLA Bruins team. He is the only student athlete ever to be named Most Outstanding Player of the Tournament three times by the NCAA.

Abdul-Jabbar transitioned from his college playing days as the “Prince of Mid-Air” and began his professional career with the Milwaukee Bucks in 1969.

He won his first NBA championship in 1971. In 1975 he joined the Los Angeles Lakers, where he won another five championships alongside Magic Johnson. Kareem has been the NBA’s league MVP six times and he was a nineteen-time All-Star who has set NBA all-time records in nine categories.

In 1995, he was inducted into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame and is the NBA’s all-time leading scorer with 38,387 points, a record he still holds today after being retired for twenty-two years. Other honors include being dubbed the Greatest College Basketball Player in History by ESPN in 2008 and one of the top 100 Top Athlete Scholars of the Century by the NCAA. *Time* magazine dubbed him “History’s Greatest Player” and he has appeared on twenty-two *Sports Illustrated* covers, his favorite being June 17, 1985, when he was designated “King of the Court” after beating the Boston Celtics.

In 2002 he led the Oklahoma Storm to a USBL Championship. From 2005–2011, he was the special assistant coach for the Los Angeles

Lakers as well as a special mentor for rising star center Andrew Bynum. He has also served as a Global Basketball Ambassador for the NBA and participates in numerous charities—especially those that promote cancer awareness and research as well as education.

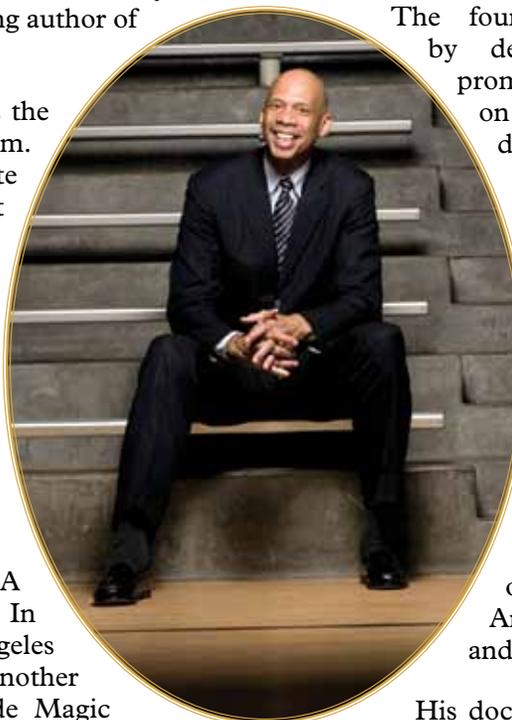
Abdul-Jabbar is a strong advocate of higher education. In 2010, he founded the Skyhook Foundation, with a mission “to motivate today’s youth to pursue higher education by using sports to celebrate social and racial justice.”

The foundation achieves this goal by developing, supporting, and promoting programs that focus on the life-affirming aspects of diversity. As the foundation continues to expand and thrive, plans are being developed to distribute inspirational films to schools across America and provide free lectures and teaching kits to high schools and colleges located in economically disadvantaged areas.

Abdul-Jabbar is a *New York Times* best-selling author and has written seven books based on the contributions of African Americans to American culture and history.

His documentary, *On the Shoulders of Giants: The Story of the Greatest Basketball Team You Never Heard Of*, was released in February 2011 and is being shown around the country to thousands of schools through his Skyhook Foundation. It has been received with great critical and popular acclaim.

In June 2011, Abdul-Jabbar was honored by President Barack Obama with a special reception at the White House before he was presented with the prestigious Abraham Lincoln Medal by Attorney General Eric Holder in a special ceremony held at the Ford Theater. The medal honors Kareem’s commitment to education, understanding, and equality that exemplify the character and lasting legacy of President Abraham Lincoln.



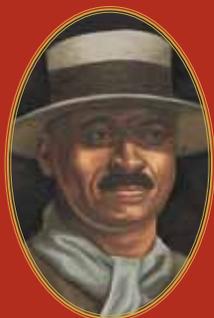
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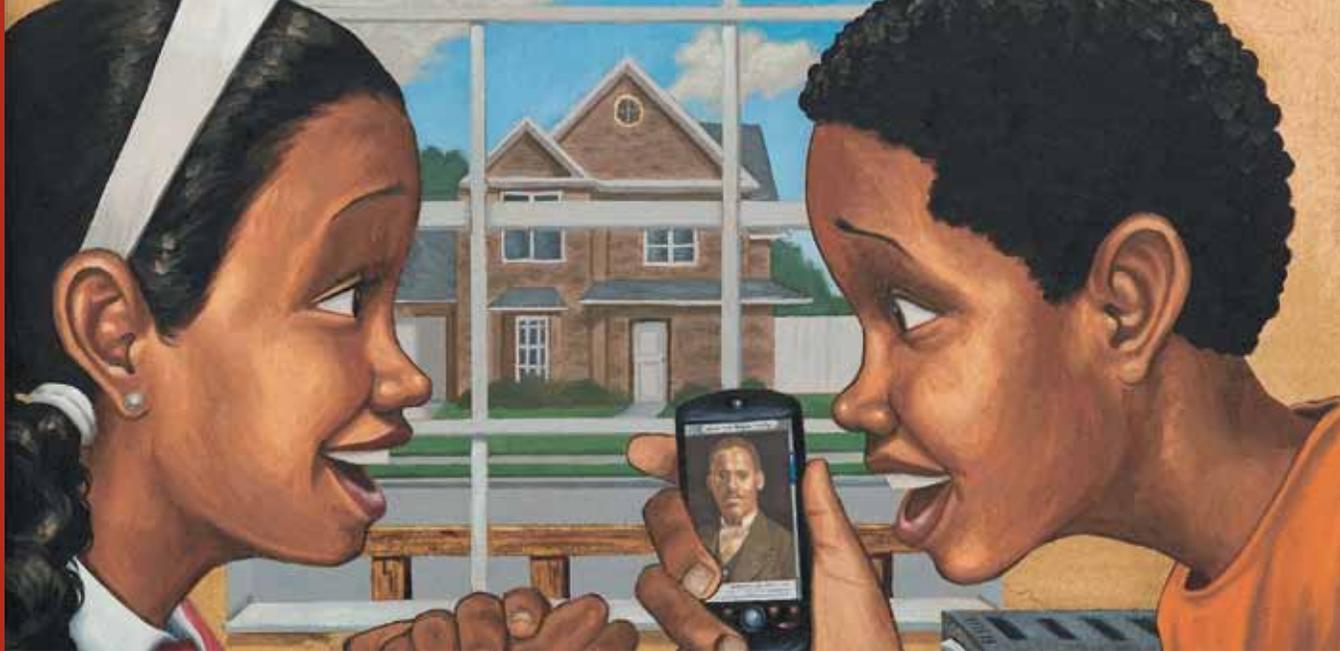
George Crum



Dr. Charles Drew



Lonnie Johnson



AUTHORS' NOTES

One measure of America's greatness is the enormity of its impact on the world through the thousands of inventions it has contributed. We have long been and continue to be a leader in scientific innovation. Unfortunately, many of the greatest American inventors have been ignored by history textbooks based on the color of their skin or their gender. Another measure of America's greatness is its willingness to right such wrongs, which is why I decided to write this book. By telling of their unsung but vital contributions, I hope to celebrate these overlooked role models so that we can all appreciate one another in meaningful ways.

I want to thank my cowriter, Raymond Obstfeld, for his steadfast commitment to the subject matter and his consistently good ideas. He is so much more than my right arm. I also want to thank my business manager, Deborah Morales, for her vision and contribution in helping me establish myself in the world of children's publishing. She has constantly encouraged me to expand my world beyond basketball, with very positive results. Lastly, I'd like to thank my editors, Karen Lotz and Katie Cunningham, for their valuable guidance and for giving me the opportunity to be a children's author in the Candlewick family.

—*Kareem Abdul-Jabbar*

There are two reasons I wanted to co-author this book. First, the chance to work again with Kareem is like being chosen first for a pickup game of playground basketball. Kareem's passion for introducing kids to overlooked inventors is another example of his lifelong commitment to education and to community. As a teacher, I share that commitment with him. For both of us, history isn't a boring subject in school; it's the record of people's hopes, achievements, and even failures. Most important, it's a lesson to all children that the ideas that change society can come from anywhere—even from them. The second reason I became involved in this project is my son, Max, and daughter, Harper. They were always in my thoughts as I wrote. Their relentless curiosity and wicked sense of humor helped inspire the characters of Herbie and Ella.

Finally, it should be noted that inspiration produces ideas, but for those ideas to become a reality often requires a lot of help from our friends. Kareem and I did the research and writing, but Deborah Morales worked tirelessly with our wonderful editors, Karen Lotz and Katie Cunningham, on every detail to make sure the book turned out every bit as awesome as it did.

—*Raymond Obstfeld*

