

# The Carter G. Woodson Book Awards, 2020

The Carter G. Woodson Book Award honors exceptional nonfiction 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 Godwin Woodson, who dedicated his career to researching and preserving African American history. Often referred to as the “father of Black History,” Woodson launched the movement that led to Black History Month.

This National Council for the Social Studies award was created in 1974 to advance the dissemination of outstanding trade books for youth and young-adult readers and to increase the body of authentic social studies resources.

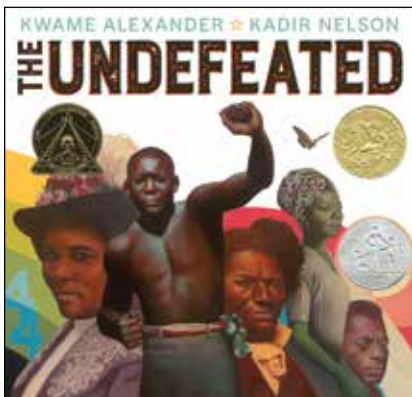
This year the Carter G. Woodson Committee selected six books based on the following criteria: (1) nonfiction, (2) set in the United States, (3) accurately reflects the perspectives, cultures, and values of the ethnic/racial group portrayed, and (4) written for young people. These books represent only a fraction of the truly outstanding books published in 2019 that were submitted for consideration.

It is our sincere desire that these books will find a place of honor in professional libraries and will contribute to a greater knowledge of individuals whose stories may not be fully known or understood. We hope these books enhance and expand the number of teaching resources that are readily available for the classroom.

—Ann Adkins, Chair, Carter G. Woodson Book Awards Committee

## Elementary Level Winner

*The Undeclared*, by Kwame Alexander and Kadir Nelson, Versify. Reviewed by Kristy A. Brugar, associate professor, Huddleston Presidential Professor of Education, and department chair, Instructional Leadership and Academic Curriculum at the University of Oklahoma, Norman, Okla.



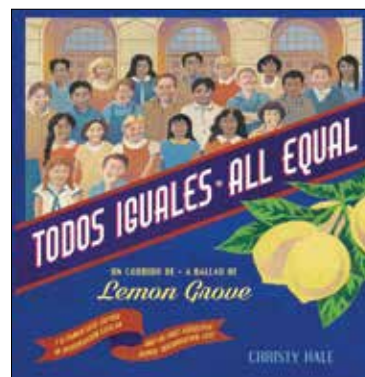
*The Undeclared* is a poignant poem by Kwame Alexander that pays tribute to African American life in the United States. Alexander, a poet and educator, originally penned the piece in 2008 as a tribute to the birth of his second daughter and the election of Barack

Obama, the first African American president. Kadir Nelson pairs the words of the poem with photorealistic illustrations that serve both to document the past and present a call to action for the future. Back matter offers historical context and additional information. This book has been recognized by the American Library Association as a 2020 Caldecott Award winner, a 2020 Coretta Scott King Award, and a 2020 Newbery Honor book.

Social Studies Standards: ● TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; ● POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE; ● CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES

## Elementary Level Honoree

*Todos Iguales /All Equal: Un Corrido de Lemon Grove /A Ballad of Lemon Grove*, Written and illustrated by Christy Hale. Children's Book Press, an imprint of Lee & Low Books. Reviewed by Elizabeth Sturm, assistant professor, Department of Special Education, College of Education at Lewis University, Romeoville, Ill.



Christy Hale's bilingual (Spanish/English) telling of *Roberto Álvarez vs. the Board of Trustees of the Lemon Grove School District* describes the Mexican American community's fight against school segregation in Lemon Grove, California. In 1930, during the Great Depression, the Lemon

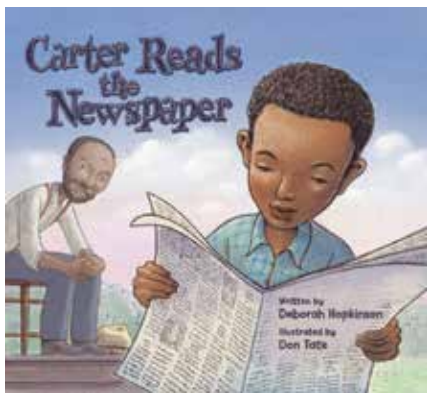
Grove School Board voted to remove all Mexican American children from the local school and segregate them into a substandard, barnlike school building in the Mexican area of the town. Readers follow as adults and children organize into the Lemon Grove Neighbors Committee and use political and legal means to fight for an equal and inclusive education. Hale's illustrations, styled on mid-nineteenth-century California citrus labels, help transport readers to the time period.

The book opens with a *corrido*, a Mexican ballad style from the nineteenth century written by the author, presented first in Spanish and then in English. The history and style of this type of lyric poem is explained in the back matter. The extensive back matter, also written in Spanish and English, provides additional information about the time period and how the actions of this school board were representative of the growing prejudice against Mexicans and Mexican Americans during the Great Depression. Also included in the back matter are names, biographical information, and photos of the court case participants as well as information on the impact of the court case.

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

### Elementary Level Honoree

*Carter Reads the Newspaper* by Deborah Hopkinson, illustrated by Don Tate. Peachtree Publishers. Reviewed by Sydney G. Beauchamp, *School of Education, Indiana University South Bend, South Bend, Ind.*



This beautiful children’s book highlights the life and work of Carter G. Woodson, for whom this award is named. Woodson, the child of two formerly enslaved people, learned to read and write at an early age. Every day, he would

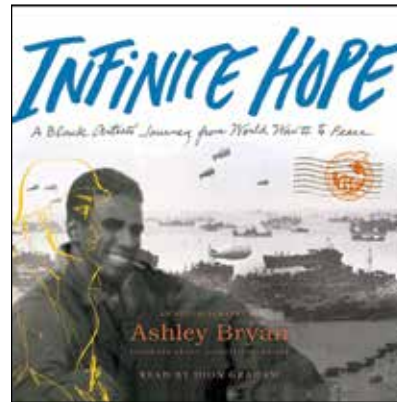
read the newspaper to his father, who could not read. As a teenager, when he worked in the coalmines, he met a man named Oliver Jones, a Civil War veteran. Jones set aside a room in his home for fellow miners to share in fellowship with books, newspapers, and a good meal. Woodson would join his friends and read to them from newspapers and African American authored books.

As a university student, Carter Woodson was told by a professor “that Black people had no history.” Dr. Woodson made it his life’s work to find the stories and history of African Americans, thus proving the ill-informed professor wrong. This wonderful story is a perfect place to begin African American biography projects. The back matter includes author and illustrator notes, and information on 43 African American leaders whose images are woven throughout the book.

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

### Middle/Secondary Level Winner

*Infinite Hope: A Black Artist’s Journey from World War II to Peace.* An autobiography by Ashley Bryan. Atheneum Books for Young Readers—an imprint of Simon & Schuster. Reviewed by Janae J. Oveson, *Department of Teacher Education, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.*



Ashley Bryan was a 19-year-old African American college student studying art at Cooper Union in New York when he was drafted into the segregated army during World War II. *Infinite Hope* recounts his personal narrative as a member of the 502nd

Port Battalion.

Bryan’s lifeline during the war was his art. He maintained his sense of humanity by keeping a sketchpad and drawing in any possible moment. What makes this war memoir unique is that Bryan captured the people, the places, and the feelings of the war in his sketches while he was living and experiencing it. He carried his art supplies in his gas mask and kept his sketches in his duffel bag to send back to his parents whenever possible.

His narrative alone is a powerful personal and historical account of the shared human experience of war. Readers are treated to a significant collection of Bryan’s sketches, which survived intact. The collection of letters he sent home to a classmate at Cooper Union during the war open up a secondary storyline. Time period photographs along with some of his later paintings add significant beauty, depth and meaning to the autobiography.

*Infinite Hope* is a beautiful compilation of sketches, narrative text, pictures, letters, and paintings that combine to provide rich insight into our shared history, as well as a deep account of hope amidst the hatred and war.

Social Studies Standards: ❶ CULTURE; ❷ TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE; ❸ PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS; ❹ INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTITY; ❺ INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS; ❻ POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE; ❼ GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

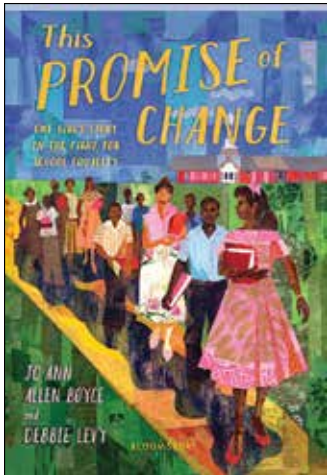
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CARTER G. WOODSON *from page 162*

### Middle/Secondary Level Honoree

*This Promise of Change: One Girl's Story in the Fight for School Equality*, by Jo Ann Allen Boyce and Debbie Levy. Bloomsbury Children's Books. Reviewed by Heidi J. Torres, assistant professor, Elementary Education, Jeannine Rainbolt College of Education, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Okla.



Before the events of Little Rock, Arkansas, there was the desegregation battle in Clinton, Tennessee. This narrative tells the story of the “Clinton 12,” the first African American students to integrate a public high school in the South after the landmark court case of *Brown v. Board of Education*. The book written by Boyce—one of the original 12—in collaboration with Levy, recounts the harrowing story of the high

school's desegregation through Boyce's eyes.

The history is told chronologically in seven parts, beginning with descriptions of a seemingly friendly and civil town, through to the initial desegregation ruling, and then the arrival of outside agitators and the increasing violence that required the intervention of the National Guard.

The spare verse packs a powerful visceral punch and primary source quotes lend immediacy to the story. Boyce and Levy paint a disconcerting portrait of what happens when the norms of white superiority and power are challenged. Readers gain a personal view of the desegregation of Southern schools. The strength, resilience, dignity, and courage of the Clinton 12 are

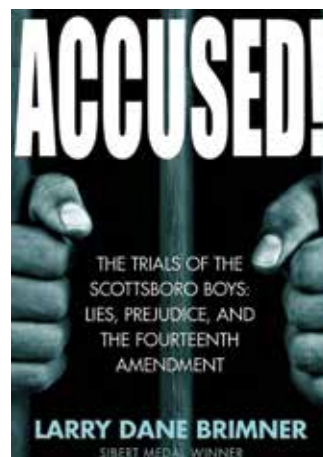
highlighted, as are the effects of racism, hatred, and emotional trauma on their lives.

The epilogue provides more context and traces what happened to the original 12 students who integrated the school. Back matter includes reflections from the authors, primary source photos, a timeline, bibliographic source material, and suggestions for further reading.

Social Studies Standards: ⌚ TIME, CONTINUITY AND CHANGE; 👤 INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS; 🗳️ CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES.

### Middle/Secondary Level Honoree

*Accused! The Trials of The Scottsboro Boys: Lies, Prejudice, and the Fourteenth Amendment*, by Larry Dane Brimner. Calkins Creek. Reviewed by Valencia Abbott, History/Social Studies Teacher, Rockingham Early College High School, Rockingham County Schools, N.C.



This poignant work tells the story of nine young African American men whose lives were turned upside down when two white women falsely accused them of rape in 1930s Alabama. Author Larry Dane Brimner presents primary and secondary sources that expose the personal tragedies and fleeting successes that would trigger a landmark set of court cases. Part history book and part civics lesson, *Accused!*

helps readers understand how this case would set a legal precedent for the U.S. Supreme Court case *Gideon v. Wainwright*, and provide lessons for inside and outside the classroom.

Social Studies Standards: 👤 INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS; ⚖️ POWER, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE; 🗳️ CIVIC IDEALS AND PRACTICES. 🗳️

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