

to a family ordeal. She said she was hopeful the book and the conversations it sparked would help those who lived in the time of the migration and their descendants alike to find closure.

"It's almost as if we've had a trauma to our family that has gone unresolved, and no one's talking about it," she stated. "We're afraid of what will happen if we talk about it, but it turns out that when we do, the air gets clearer. That's the goal of this experience, to actually validate the lives of those who lived it."

Wilkerson's talk attracted a diverse audience of readers and fans, ranging in age from teenagers to senior citizens. Benjamin Harris, director of the high school at Carter G. Woodson School of Challenge, brought a contingent of students in the school's advanced placement government and English IV courses to hear from the Atlanta resident, who has been on tour since "The Warmth of Other Suns" was released in September 2010.

"Our AP classes are expanding and I felt that the instructors could use this text as part of their curriculum. That's the reason I wanted to bring them here," explained Harris, a former attorney. "(I want them to see) literature is a lived experience. It's not just reading a book, but it's engaging with the authors, it's engaging with other readers. Literature is a way of life."

Hillsborough native Elnora Gore said she has participated in several On the Same Page and On the Same Poem programs at the library. After hearing Wilkerson's talk, the retired educator said she was eager to delve into "The Warmth of Other Suns."

"It encourages me to read the books for one thing, and just to come together as a group and experience what other people are saying," the Clemmons resident said of On the Same Page. "It's inspiring. I haven't read the book, so I'm looking forward to reading it."

Crystal Holland, co-chair of the On the Same Page program, which is now in its 11th year, said more than 1,000 Forsyth County residents participated in the initiative, which was themed "It's All About the Journey!"

The program attracted the most intergenerational audience she has seen to date, Holland said.

"We've had such a wonderful time presenting this book to the community. The conversations that have been sparked by it have been incredible," related Holland, who said her family was also a part of the Great Migration. "...I am absolutely blown away by how many people have come together from so many different parts of the community."

After her talk, Wilkerson spent more than an hour signing copies of her book for dozens of readers, many of whom told her how reading it had touched their lives.

"It took a long time because everyone had a story they wanted to share. Wherever I have gone, generally it takes awhile because everybody has a story, and they all want to tell it," she explained. "...The reason why people have embraced the book is because it really is their story. It's everybody's story."

"The Warmth of Other Suns" retails for \$16.95 for the trade paperback or \$30 for the hardcover edition and is available at [www.randomhouse.com](http://www.randomhouse.com). For more information about Wilkerson, [www.isabelwilkerson.com](http://www.isabelwilkerson.com).

Link to story: [www.wschronicle.com/2012/10/black-migration-author-draws-large-crowd/](http://www.wschronicle.com/2012/10/black-migration-author-draws-large-crowd/)

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