

# Snapshots of a Family: The Delanys

## New exhibit highlights family of 'Having Our Say'

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

A new exhibit at the N.C. Museum of History in Raleigh highlights Sarah Louise "Sadie" and Annie Elizabeth "Bessie" Delany and their remarkable family. Sadie and Bessie gained national fame after the 1993 publication of "Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years," a book they co-authored with Amy Hill Hearth. The New York Times best seller tells their stories of "family, love, sisterhood and a century of American history."

Sadie and Bessie were born into a prominent African-American family on the campus of St. Augustine's College in Raleigh. The sisters and their eight siblings grew up on the campus where their father, an Episcopal bishop, served as vice president.

Bishop Henry and Nanny Delany reared their children to believe in a strong work ethic and community service. According to Sadie, their father often told them, "Your job is to help people."

All 10 children became college-educated professionals in the face of social discrimination and financial challenges. Their remarkable achievements unfold in the exhibit

Snapshots of a Family: The Delanys, which runs until January 2002. The small lobby exhibit includes numerous photographs, several of Sadie's and Bessie's personal belongings, and stories that help reveal this family's mission to serve others.

The family patriarch, Bishop Delany, was born into slavery in Georgia in 1858.

In 1918 he became the first African-American Episcopal priest to be elected an assistant bishop. He and Nanny, a teacher at St. Augustine's, served as influential role models for their children. The couple lived to see their sons and daughters become accomplished lawyers, doctors, teachers and community leaders. Like their parents, the Delany children often reached beyond their professional obligations to help others. For example, Lemuel, the oldest child, became a Raleigh physician who devoted many hours to community service and outreach.

Sadie and Bessie graduated from St. Augustine's and taught school for several years. In 1917 they decided to move to Harlem to pursue other opportunities. Sadie attended Columbia University, where she earned her bachelor and

master's degrees.

In 1930 she became the first African-American teacher of domestic science in New York City's high schools.

Bessie graduated from Pratt Institute in 1918. After receiving her degree in dental surgery from Columbia University in 1923, she became the second African-American woman licensed to practice dentistry in New York. Bessie established a dental practice with her brother Henry, a graduate of New York University. Their practice would not turn away anyone, even patients who could not afford to pay.

Snapshots of a Family includes the oak dental chest Bessie used in her office.

The mission-style cabinet is accompanied by her diploma from the College of Dental and Oral Surgery of New York, a part of Columbia University.

The exhibit also includes Sadie's fur coat, Bessie's dentist uniform. Bessie noted that she and Sadie were careful shoppers who "didn't want to go and spend all our savings on furniture."

Of particular interest is a Birds of America china set by Alfred Meakin of England. The set



The Delany family poses in Harlem in 1928.

belonged to Henry's daughter, Virginia Delany Murphy. According to Delany family lore, Mrs. Murphy used the china to serve Sadie, Bessie and Eleanor

Roosevelt during a brunch given by African-American women in Harlem. The Delany sisters lived in New

York for more than 75 years. Learn more about the joys, struggles and accomplishments of their remarkable family in the exhibit Snapshots of a Family.

# Woodson, Collier win 2001 Coretta Scott King Awards

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Jacqueline Woodson, author of "Miracle's Boys," and Bryan Collier, illustrator for "Uptown," are the 2001 winners of the Coretta Scott King Awards honoring African-American authors and illustrators of outstanding books for children and young adults. The announcement was made on Jan. 15 during the American Library Association (ALA) Midwinter Meeting in Washington, D.C.

The Coretta Scott King Awards are administered by the Coretta Scott King Task Force of the ALA's Social Responsibilities Round Table.

"Miracle's Boys," published by G.P. Putnam's Sons, is set in contemporary Harlem and tells the story of the struggle of three brothers coping

with the death of their parents. In this compelling family drama, Ty'ree, the oldest brother accepts responsibility for keeping the family together. Charlie, the middle brother, who has just been released from a juvenile correctional facility, comes home angry. Lafayette, the youngest, fears he will be separated from his siblings. It is through Lafayette's eyes that Woodson skillfully draws the reader into the brothers' resolve to survive and overcome pain and loss.

"Woodson's poetic and sensitive narrative portrays complex characters who display unconditional love for each other. The revealing, authentic dialogue deftly captures the essence of the characters' inner turmoil and layer by layer uncovers their strength and determination to survive," said Pauletta Brown Bracy,

chair of the King Awards Jury.

A resident of New York City, Woodson was born in Columbus, Ohio, and grew up in Greenville, S.C. After receiving a B.A. in English, she worked as a drama therapist for runaways and homeless children in New York City. But now writes full time. Woodson has also received the Kenyon Review Award in Literary Excellence in Fiction and two Coretta Scott King Honor Awards.

Collier's simple narrative and stirring illustrations bring to life "Uptown," published by Henry Holt and edited by Laura Godwin. The book creates a wonderful sense of adventure through a visual tour of Harlem. With a confident young boy as a tour guide, Collier's colored collage illustrations share the pride of his neighborhood. The movement,

smells, and sounds of jazz at the Apollo Theatre; chicken and waffles; brownstones and barbershops invite the reader to pay a visit to Uptown.

"Bryan Collier's innovative collage-illustrations combine photographs and paint to create architecture, urban landscape and people in an original way. Through his positive and pride-filled look at contemporary Harlem, Collier builds form using textual pieces of cut-paper collage, patterns, shapes and even chocolate bars juxtaposed to one another in a vibrant array of color and character," said Bracy.

Collier grew up in Pocomoke City, Md., where he began painting at the age of 15. In 1985, he won first place

in a national competition and had his art exhibited in the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. That same year, he was also awarded a scholarship to the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, N.Y., and went on to earn a B.F.A. with honors.


Collier now lives in Harlem, N.Y., where he is the director of the Harlem Hospital's Horizon Art Studio for children and their parents.

In addition to receiving the Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award, Collier was named one of the 2001 King Honor Illustrators for his artwork in "Freedom River," written by Doreen Rappaport and published by Jump at the Sun. The awards jury also named two addi-

tional King Author Honor Books: "Virgie Goes to School with Us Boys," illustrated by E.B. Lewis, authored by Elizabeth Fitzgerald Howard and published by Simon & Schuster; and "Only Passing Through: The Story of Sojourner Truth," illustrated by R. Gregory Christie, authored by Anne Rockwell and published by Knopf.

One King Author Honor Book was selected: "Let It Shine! Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters," by Andrea Davis Pinkney, illustrated by Stephen Alcorn. "Let It Shine! Stories of Black Women Freedom Fighters" was published by Harcourt/Gulliver Books.

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