

UNBOUGHT



CELEBRATING CHAMPIONS
OF VOTING RIGHTS

Music Theatre with the Core Ensemble

Welcome!

We are delighted to have you and your students in the audience of UNBOUGHT.

In order to assist you in responding to the performance, these materials are provided with the goal of tying your classroom work to the production. They are intended to be used following the performance as a catalyst for discussion and further research by your students about the information and ideas in the piece.

Although the lives of Ida B. Wells and Shirley Chisholm took place several generations ago, we are particularly interested in how your students find the collective accomplishments of these women to be relevant in today's world. Therefore, these materials are less curricular-focused, and more thematically-focused. We encourage you to use these materials to promote dialogue and debate.

Questions or comments about UNBOUGHT are welcome. Please let us know how we're doing and about the experience of this production. On your school's website you and your students can post reviews as well as respond to reviews written by other students.

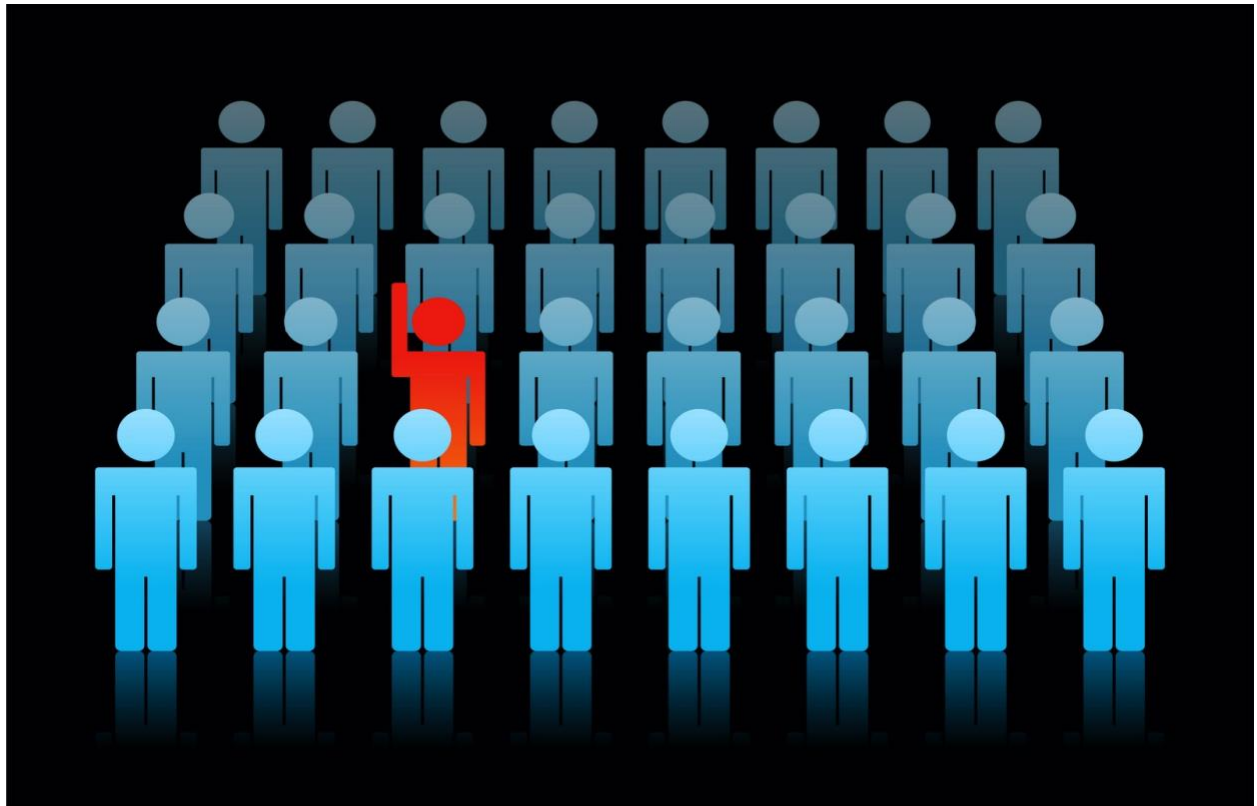
Thank you for continuing the conversation which this production merely begins, in its powerful and impassioned call for justice, compassion, and humanity.

Margot Emery
Managing Director
THE CORE ENSEMBLE

WHAT IS FEAR?



WHAT IS COURAGE?





COURAGE

*Ida and Shirley would certainly qualify
as having "the right stuff"
in the eyes of these esteemed figures.*

"Any intelligent fool can make things bigger and more complex... It takes a touch of genius - and a lot of courage to move in the opposite direction."

Albert Einstein

"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."

Winston Churchill

"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."

Winston Churchill

"Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear."

Mark Twain



IDA B. WELLS QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Below are script excerpts from the Ida scene in UNBOUGHT.
Ask students to read, reflect, and respond.

#1

*Granddaddy was a white man who impregnated a black slave named Peggy.
He brought my Daddy, James Wells, to Holly Springs, Mississippi
when Daddy was eighteen to become a carpenter's apprentice.
My mama, Lizzie, born on a plantation in Virginia was sold away
from her family and never ever did find her siblings after the Civil War.*

Advances in medical technology and genetic analysis combined with historical records and oral histories make it possible to trace a person's lines of descent from original ancestors. Many genealogical websites now make it quite easy to construct one's family tree. Ask students to consider why there must be ethical standards and guidelines in this commercial field.

#2

*I was visiting Grandma Peggy's farm in Tippah County for the summer
when a letter arrived from Holly Springs.
"Jim and Lizzie and baby Stanley have died of the fever." Yellow fever.
I could not imagine the horror for my little brothers and sisters –
witnessing the jaundice, the foul breath,
seeing the vomiting of blood turned black by digestion.*

There was no vaccine to guard against yellow fever during the epidemic of 1878
It was only finally developed during the 1940's.

Ask students to research the evolution
of public health policy in the United States.

#3

I took a seat in the first-class ladies' car and was reading a book when the conductor came by to collect tickets. I handed him mine but he handed it back and said he wanted to treat me like a lady but that I would have to move to the colored car. I replied, "If you wish to treat me like a lady you will leave me alone." He leaned down and whispered, "You're not allowed in this car. Move to the one set aside for coloreds."

Discuss intersectionality.

#4

I had a very good friend in Memphis, Thomas Moss. His lynching was my first lesson in white supremacy. Thomas opened a market and named it The Peoples Grocery Store. It just so happened that across the street was a grocery store owned by a white man named William Barrett. He liked being the only store in the area. But Thomas felt that colored people shouldn't have only one choice of where to spend their money. Choice! Is that not the American way?

Ask students to identify current events and issues
over which freedom of choice is threatened.

What are the risks to democracy
if choice and competition become limited
or are eliminated altogether?



SHIRLEY CHISHOLM QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Below are script excerpts from the Shirley scene in UNBOUGHT.

Ask students to read, reflect, and respond.

#1

*Conrad Chisholm – the man I married --allowed me to be me
and to pursue my dreams of politics.*

At no time did he try to hold me back.

“Shirley remember, I’m your biggest cheerleader.”

I adored that about him.

*He had no problems in positioning himself off to the side
when photographers clamored to take my photo,
or hanging out in the wings as I stood on stage.*

Ask students to create a list of prominent women both nationally and globally whose careers have been championed by their husbands, men whose own careers took “backseat” or “backstage” roles.

Ask students to find statements by these couples regarding this choice.

#2

*I decided to run for state legislature.
From the start I was met with hostility because of my gender.
Including some women, "Why aren't you at home?"
Once while I was canvassing at a housing project an elderly black man lit into me.
"Young woman, what are you doing? Did you get your husband's breakfast this morning? Did you straighten up your house? Why are you running for office?
That is something for men!"
I didn't strike back at him, or at other black men who wanted to argue with me.
I understood too well the reason for lashing out at me;
in a society that denies him real manhood,
I was threatening his shaky self-esteem even more.*

Does Shirley's understanding of the reason for the elderly black gentleman lashing out her hold up in today's American culture?
Why or why not?

#3

*Americans were demanding a new sensibility, a new philosophy.
Nothing was more important to me than solving the domestic problems
of poverty, ignorance, hunger, and racism.
Racism had become so universal in this country,
so widespread and deep seeded, that it was invisible
because it was so normal.
I felt I needed to go further.*

Ask students to discuss systemic racism.
Ask students to cite events in their own lifetimes
which tell them that there is still much work to be done.

#4

*I stand before you today as a candidate for the Democratic nomination for the
presidency of the United States of America.
I am not the candidate of black America, although I am black and proud.
I am not the candidate of the women's movement of this country,*

*although I am a woman and I'm equally proud of that.
I am not the candidate of any political policies or fat-cats or special interests.
I stand here now, without endorsements from many big-name politicians
or celebrities or any other kind of prop.
I do not intend to offer you the tired clichés that have too long
been an accepted part of our political life.
I am the candidate of the people of America.*

Ask students to draw parallels between the presidential election of 1972 and those of 2016, 2020, and upcoming 2024?



When Shirley Chisholm ran for office in 1968 and subsequently in later conventions and elections, the framework of the world, particularly in the United States was vastly different than Ida B. Wells' America.

What follows are images which suggest just a few of the significant historical and cultural moments in the United States from 1967-72. Together they form a backdrop for the world in which Shirley was breaking down barriers.

Ask students to consider how Ida may have reacted if she could have traveled forward in time and stepped into Shirley's era. How might she be amazed? How might she be troubled?



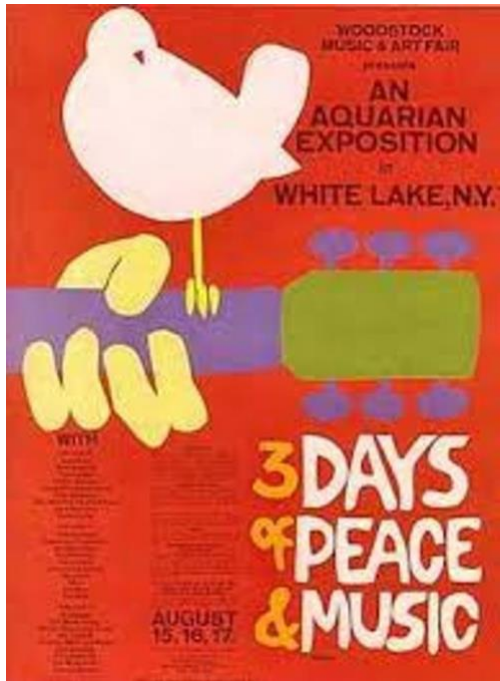
Summer Olympics, 1968.



"A new hat – rather, a bonnet – was thrown into the Presidential race today, that of Shirley Chisholm." 1972.



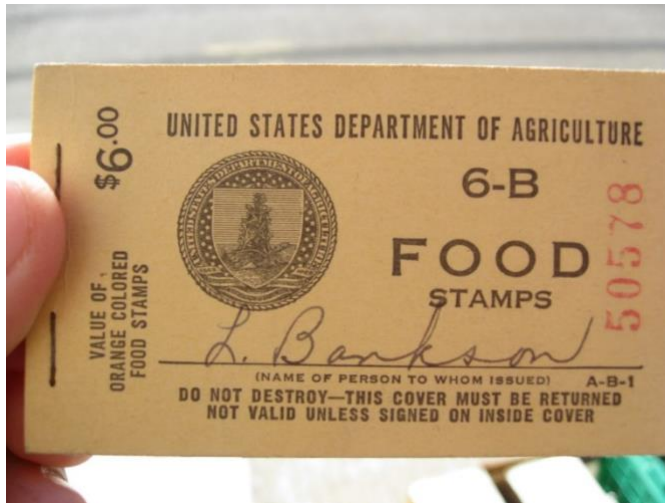
Stonewall Inn riots, June 1969.



Woodstock Festival, 1969.



Kent State University massacre, May 4, 1970.



Food stamp, late 1960's.



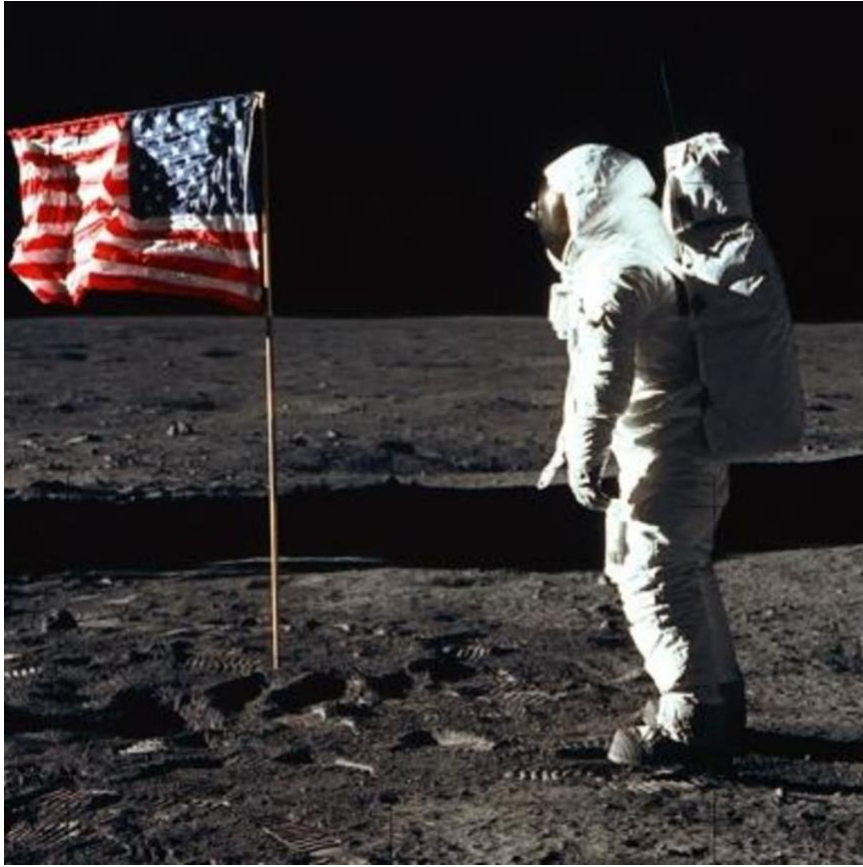
Photo entitled "Saigon Execution" taken by Eddie Addams of a Viet Cong prisoner being executed during the height of the Tet offensive during the Vietnam War. 1968.



Earth Week, 1970.



MIDNIGHT COWBOY, a 1969 film, depicts the unlikely friendship between two young hustlers. It is the only X-rated film to ever win the Oscar for Best Picture.



First moonwalk, July 20, 1969.



Assassination of Robert Kennedy, June 6, 1968.



Original Broadway production of HAIR. 1968.



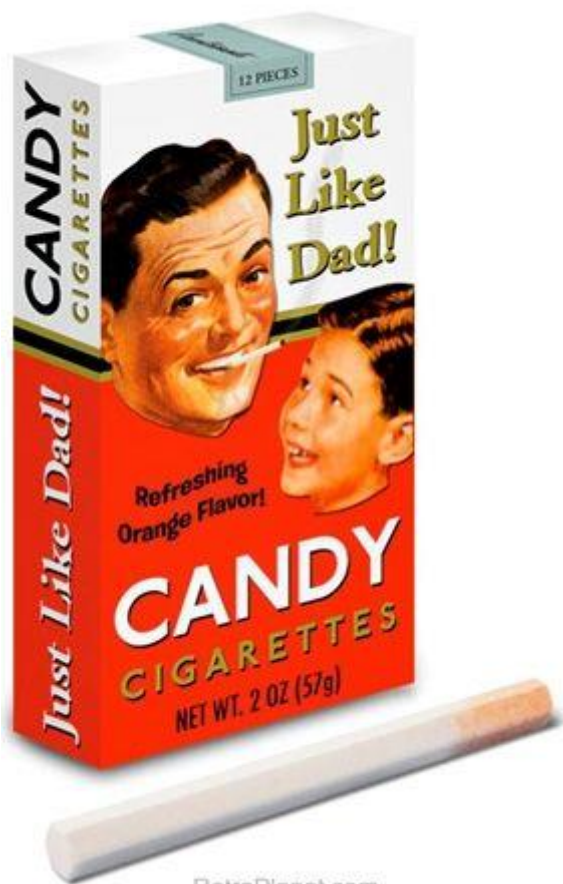
Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. April 4, 1968

3.5" Floppy Diskette

ComputerHope.com



The first 3.5" floppy disk is introduced in 1967. It was capable of storing 1.44 MB of data. To read and write to this disk, it was inserted into a floppy disk drive.



RetroPlanet.com

In 1971 President Richard Nixon signs the Public Health Cigarette Smoking Act which banned cigarette ads for airing on television and radio.

**TO BE BOUGHT --
OR NOT TO BE BOUGHT.
THAT IS THE QUESTION.**



The Christian apostle and writer Paul wrote: *Money is the root of all evil.*

Ben Franklin: *Money has never made man happy, nor will it. There is nothing in its nature to produce happiness. The more of it one has the more one wants.*

Garth Brooks: *You aren't wealthy until you have something money can't buy.*

Gertrude Stein: *Anyone who tells you money can't buy happiness never had any.*



Groucho Marx: *While money can't buy happiness, it certainly lets you choose your own form of misery.*

Marilyn Monroe: *The one thing a person wants in life is usually something basic that money can't buy.*

Robert Holden: *Money is important but it is not everything. Think about everything you already have that money can't buy.*

John Denver: *Home grown tomatoes, home grown tomatoes. What would life be like without homegrown tomatoes? Only two things that money can't buy: that's true love, and homegrown tomatoes.*



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Ask students to analyze the pressures felt by Ida, and Shirley as they struggled to not compromise their principles and give in to easier, safer choices.

Ask students to cite examples in our contemporary culture of men and women “being bought” as well as of men and women who refuse to be “bought”.

CREATE YOUR OWN IDEA FOR A THEATRE PIECE CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

Since 1993, the Core Ensemble has produced and performed new music-theatre works based on multicultural, feminist, and humanist topics.

We strive to:

1. Promote intercultural understanding.
2. Explore social justice issues through artistic interpretation.
3. Provide education programs for young people and adults;
4. Offer emotional impactful cultural experiences that spark conversation and inspire actions that make a difference in promoting equality for all.

Audience members often tell Core Ensemble artists, “I had never heard of any of these people before until I came to this show.”

So, how do we come up with the ideas for these various theatre pieces?

The process of developing each new music-theatre work in our repertoire begins with deciding on a multicultural theme or issue and then choosing real historical figures drawn from the African-American and Latinx experiences as well as the unique perspective of women whose lives exemplify their dedication to the cause.

Sometimes the theme is identified first; at other times, the individuals are selected first. In any case, a writer is then commissioned to create a script in which one actor or one actress will play all three characters. (And sometimes even more!)

Music (both existing works, as well as specially commissioned pieces) is then researched, selected, and “wed” to the finished text. Finally, in rehearsal, the actor/actress, musical trio (pianist, cellist, percussionist), and stage director collaborate in creating “the world” of the show.

At last, the piece is ready for performance. It is the interaction between the performers and audience which becomes the catalyst for opening up dialogue surrounding the stories of the very passionate men and women whose lives and work have been brought to life onstage.

ASSIGNMENT

Who are people in history whose stories may not be generally known whom you would want to see brought attention to on the stage? Why?

Could you find a common connecting thread among three or four figures which you think could form the basis for a script? (Remember, one performer must play all three or four roles.)

What would the title for this production?

To get you started, here are examples of how Core Ensemble shows have put various figures who did not even know each other into the same room together.

AIN'T I A WOMAN

Sojourner Truth, ex-slave and abolitionist

Zora Neale Hurston, novelist and anthropologist

Clementine Hunter, folk artist

Fannie Lou Hamer, civil rights worker

LOS VALIENTES

Diego Rivera, controversial Mexican muralist and Communist

Oscar Romero, Salvadoran archbishop assassinated over his commitment to human rights

Joaquin Murrieta (aka: Zorro), Mexican-American desperado in pursuit of social justice

TRES VIDAS

Frida Kahlo, groundbreaking Mexican painter known for her self-portraits and feminism

Rufina Amaya, Salvadoran peasant activist

Alfonsina Storni, Argentinean poet

OF EBONY EMBERS

This production celebrates the lives of the great African-American poets Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Claude McKay – all as seen through the eyes of the great muralist and painter Aaron Douglas.

UNBOUGHT

Ida B. Wells, African-American journalist and women's suffrage activist
Shirley Chisholm, first African-American Congresswoman from New York and first to run for President

LAS MAGNIFICAS

Chavela Vargas, iconic Mexican ranchera singer
Celia Cruz, Cuban singer ("The Queen of Salsa")
Violeta Parra, Chilean singer considered the mother of Latin American folk music

EQUALLY DIVINE

This production explores the theory and possibility that the Mona Lisa painting was inspired not only by the original female model, but also by a young man, an apprentice to the artist Leonardo da Vinci – opening our minds to tolerance, gender fluidity, and celebrating men's and women's empowerment.

ASSIGNMENT

The actual process of developing a finished script comes after hours first of research. Historical accuracy is essential. However, historical accuracy can run the risk of becoming too scholarly and "historically boring"!

We think of each scene in these productions as an individual monologue. Through this device, the actor or actress "breaks the fourth wall" with the audience. In this way the audience becomes a bit of a confidant for the character, who tells his/her story in a very personal way – at once engaging, amusing, and vulnerable.

1. Which historical figures do you consider to be your own heroes? Select a single person of interest to you and write a journal or diary entry in which he/she reveals and describes a life event or circumstance.

2. Read and/or record this entry aloud. (Or ask someone to do so for you.) Ask yourself if it holds interest for the listener. Is it compelling? Does the listener want

to hear more? Revise accordingly. Keep revising. Keep revising, and hopefully at some point it “feels” right!

3. Select another occurrence from the same character’s life. Again, write a journal or diary entry about it in that character’s “voice”. Keep polishing until, again, it feels right.

4. Keep selecting the key moments in the character’s life and work which “demand to be told” and write on them as if they “demand to be heard”.

5. Eventually, all of this writing needs to be organized so that it flows together as one continuous piece of storytelling between the character and the audience. Figure out the best sequence for conveying all the facts of the character’s life. Keep experimenting with finding the best beginning-middle-end. What/where/when is the climax of the scene?

6. Again, it is very useful if at some point you have someone other than yourself read the material aloud for you to hear. Invite others to listen as well. This is a process which requires give and take. And, usually a good dose of humility when someone says, “It would probably be clearer if you just cut these seven lines on page three.”

Eventually, you will then have the first monologue for your show (titled what?).

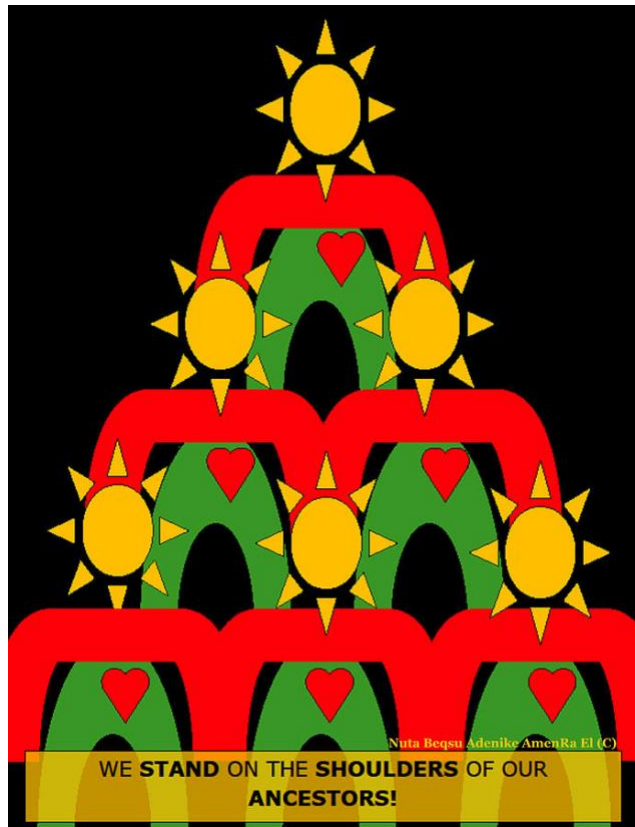
Now, one down: two to go! Good luck!



**LINKING OUR PAST
WITH OUR TODAY:
GIVING TOWARD TOMORROW**

Shirley Chisholm was quick to always acknowledge and honor the strong women who had come before her; women whose hard work, sacrifice, and accomplishments paved the road for her to believe that she could hold political office and, indeed, run for the highest office in the land.

On whose shoulders do you stand?



Ask students to discuss or write about people to whom they give credit for “paving the way”. These may include family members, historical figures, or men and women in today’s culture.

What did they do, and how do they inspire you to achieve your full potential?

NEVER

NEVER

NEVER

GIVE UP

WINSTON CHURCHILL

Sponsored in part by the Cultural Council of Palm Beach County, the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.



Made possible by funding from PNC Arts Alive. Funding has been provided to the Core Ensemble from the National Endowment for the Humanities through a grant from Florida Humanities as part of the 2020 Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020.

