

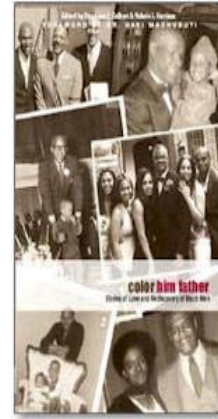
**Color Him Father:  
Stories of Love and Rediscovery of Black Men  
Edited by Stephana I. Colbert and Valerie I. Harrison  
Foreword by Dr. Haki Madhubuti**

Kinship Press

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Book Review by Kam Williams

“My dad has a gentle spirit and quiet determination. He worked 30 years for the U.S. Postal Service, beginning as the first black window clerk in Oklahoma City. He ignored ‘suggestions’ from white folk that he ought not apply for the job, and when he was hired, spent the first several years eating his lunch in the men’s room; at that time, black folk were not permitted to eat in the Post Office lunch room. If asked, each of my siblings has a special story of my dad. This is mine...” -- Excerpted from the chapter “My Favorite Green Dress” by Stephana Colbert

At a time when the image of the black male has been badly tarnished by a media barrage of negative stereotypes, *Color Him Father* arrives as a very welcome breath of fresh air. For in sharp contrast to the prevailing portrayal of African-American fathers as absent, unemployed, unreliable, and unavailable emotionally, this collection of childhood memoirs recounts touching tales of men who exhibited extraordinary integrity, strength and dedication, and often in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges. The uplifting tome was the brainchild of two attorneys, Stephana Colbert and Valerie Harrison, who edited the book along with contributing entries of their own. The text essentially consists of around three-dozen, heartfelt reminiscences by successful African-Americans about the generally unpretentious, male role models who made a difference in their lives. *Color Him Father* is an invaluable addition to the body of black literature precisely because of the fact that it represents a celebration of simple men who went to work to put food on the table and to keep a roof over their families’ heads at a time when racism had severely limited their education and work options. Yet, embracing a vision of better days for their offspring, they persevered, and we see how that dedication has reaped rewards by reading the brief bios of the children who write about them. It is important to note that not all the honorees here are biological fathers. *Color Him Father* contains equally-emotional testimonials to step-fathers, grandfathers, a spiritual mentor, a co-worker and others who played a pivotal part in raising these children. The book also includes family portraits, which is great, since that enables one to get a good feel for the subjects of each narrative. Rather than play favorites by picking which remembrance affected me most deeply, suffice to say that I found my eyes welling up on more than one occasion. For, again and again, I recognized some aspect of my own experience in these distinctly African-American tableaux, and couldn’t help but acknowledge my own debt of gratitude to my recently-departed father who had overcome considerable adversity to put all five of us kids through college on a blue-collar salary, while

remaining married to my mother for over 50 years till the day he died. In sum, without any pretense, Color Him Father serves up an encouraging diversity of authentic anecdotes about some humble souls men just being the nurturers and providers that they naturally are. A long overdue tribute to the fading memory of the men of the Best Black Generation.

Arts & Entertainment with Kam Williams. [www.awarenessmagazine.net/kamae.html](http://www.awarenessmagazine.net/kamae.html)