

# African-American Children's Book Writers & Illustrators

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## James Lisbon, Publisher, Awareness Magazine.net

### **Q. Tell us a little about how you first established your company or organization or career?**

A. About ten years ago, I was reacquainted with my cousin who owns a jazz club. I started helping him with promotion of the club. As time went on I would also help to design fliers for the particular shows and sometime even musicians who may be 'gigging' somewhere else. After about six months I started thinking about doing fliers as a full time service. As I continued to "hang" out at the jazz club, I met several upstanding people of color who I noticed are never talked about or mentioned in mainstream media. With the passion to design and the passion to tell their stories I started AMAG/Awareness Magazine. The first Issue came out in July of 1997, but because of a myriad of reasons, we did not produce another issue until September 2001 and since then we have been around, striving to continue to be the voices of those not receiving the proper recognition.

### **Q. What were your literary, film or writing experiences while growing up?**

A. My father was an elementary school teacher when I was growing up, reading was as natural as G.I. Joes dolls. I vividly remember my father telling us "pick up the encyclopedia and read something, if you do not have any homework."

### **Q. Who (or what) influences your literary or entrepreneur drive?**

A. My drive is mainly self driven, simply because I feel that this life is supposed to be spent enjoying. Not to say there aren't dozens of individuals that I greatly admire.

### **Q. What is (are) your goal(s) five years from now?**

A. Simply to have AMAG as a household name. Not only as a magazine for the conscious professional, but also to be active in our collective communities and making a difference.

### **Q. What were your setbacks, if any, when establishing your company/career and how did you overcome them?**

A. I think understanding the business side of a business is extremely important. I am still overcoming obstacle in terms of learning the business. I do not think there is any other way to truly understanding what your business is without trial and error. I welcome it, because when it is all said and done I will know the publishing business inside and out.

### **Q. What are your challenges now and how do you plan to overcome them?**

My biggest challenge is marketing and distribution. I plan to overcome this by simply strengthening my relationships and continue to be creative in our movement forward.

### **Q. What is your advice to aspiring literary entrepreneurs, filmmakers or entrepreneurs in your field?**

A. Honestly love what you are doing. Find a support group-which is not easy- and just follow your heart and mind. Nothing worth doing is done easily. Enjoy your time while perfecting your craft.

### **Q. What would you say regarding your business or career that brings a smile to your face?**

A. Everyday waking up, knowing my magazine is making a difference in people lives. The readers, features and writers. I also meet hundreds conscious of people and that is always refreshing

ALSO Black History Month is for other races, to learn about us. We should thirst for knowledge about ourselves weekly if not daily.

**"Without Struggle, there is no progress"**

*Frederick Douglas*