

Writers such as Charles Chestnut, who dared to tell the truth. A poet named Langston Hughes counseled on the effects of racism in “A Montage of a Dream Deferred.” “Does it stink like rotten meat? Or crust and sugar over like syrupy sweet?” Following the path of those who have stepped back and taken a look at us, Gilda Rogers has done so with “Arrested Development the State of Black Achievement and Education in Hip-Hop America.”

Gilda Rogers was recently interviewed by Style Magazine contributing writer, Caryl Lucas

Q. What made you write this book?

A. (A long deep breath) It was a reaction to something I saw that totally disturbed me.

Q. What disturbed you?

A. Black youth.

Q. What was it about Black youth that disturbed you so much that you would go to such lengths it took you three years to write this book?

A. For starters it was a catharsis of some sort, because it caused me to look for answers and reasons why my Black community was not the vibrant, active, insightful and intelligent community that I remembered it to be. Somehow I wound up making a living in education and there before me live and in living color, I saw my young sisters and brothers haphazardly doing no justice to the Black condition. I mean in bettering that condition, but instead I saw it deteriorating and a fear of education. I needed to know why and how had this occurred so suddenly?

Q. What is revealed in the book?

A. Through the data and ongoing research it addresses the attitudinal shift in concert with a historical timeline that is indicative of Black progress, the overcoming of the Black oppressed human condition and lineage of activism and resistance. The timeline is essential in tracing Black progress while examining the education of Black people juxtaposed with social mores.

Q. What's next?

A. Well, I am working with a committee The Historic Preservation Commission of Red Bank to save the T. Thomas Fortune Home in Red Bank. The home was built in 1883 and Fortune who was a notable Black journalist and activist purchased the home in 1901. It would be great if the home could be developed into the T. Thomas Fortune Resource and Center for Journalism for at-risk youth. I am really just trying to do my part in the only way that I know, to use my voice and to raise awareness in the Black community. The way I see it either you're a part of the problem or you're a part of the solution.”

Q. Thank you.

