

PAULI MURRAY

SHOUTING for the RIGHTS of ALL PEOPLE

DEBORAH NELSON LINCK

Illustrations by ANGELA CORBIN



Morehouse Publishing
NEW YORK

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Morehouse Publishing, 19 East 34th Street, New York, NY 10016
Morehouse Publishing is an imprint of Church Publishing Incorporated.

Cover art by Angela Corbin
Cover design by Jennifer Kopec, 2Pug Design
Typeset by Rose Design

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Nelson Linck, Deborah, author. | Corbin, Angela, 1973- illustrator.

Title: Pauli Murray : shouting for the rights of all people / Deborah
Nelson Linck ; illustrated by Angela Corbin.

Description: New York, NY : Morehouse Publishing, [2022] | Audience: Ages
6-12 | Audience: Grades 4-6

Identifiers: LCCN 2021059494 (print) | LCCN 2021059495 (ebook) |
ISBN 9781640655577 (paperback) | ISBN 9781640655584 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Murray, Pauli, 1910-1985--Juvenile literature. | African
Americans--Biography--Juvenile literature. | African American civil
rights workers--Biography--Juvenile literature. | African American
women--Biography--Juvenile literature. | African American women civil
rights workers--Biography--Juvenile literature.

Classification: LCC E185.97.M95 N45 2022 (print) | LCC E185.97.M95
(ebook) | DDC 305.89/96073--dc23/eng/20220131

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021059494>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021059495>

*This book is dedicated to all those “fearfully and wonderfully made”
individuals that continue to inspire my life.*

*Special thanks to all the people who have laid eyes on, edited,
and helped me birth this book.*

*To Van, Ja’Lon, Deb, Rob, Peter, Sarah, James, Lisa, Andrew, Alex,
Wendy, Nancy, Maggie, and Dan, thank you for your love and support.*

Contents

The Use of Pronouns in This Book	vii
A Note to the Reader	ix
1. The Beginning	1
2. Faith	5
3. Childhood	7
4. School	9
5. Race and Jim Crow Laws	15
6. Life as a Young Adult	19
7. After College	23
8. Law School	29
9. Writing	33
10. Later Life	35
11. Fearfully and Wonderfully Made	41
Glossary	45
Timeline	47
About the Author and Illustrator	54

The Use of Pronouns in This Book

I have given a lot of thought to pronoun usage in this book. It is important to note that Pauli Murray used singular “she”/“her” pronouns during her life. The use of more inclusive language has its own history, and it continues to evolve. Today many choose to use gender-neutral pronouns, such as “they” and “their.” Had Pauli lived at a different time “she” might have selected pronouns that more accurately reflected “her” gender identity. For this reason I have chosen to use a combination of pronouns to both respect Pauli’s voice and honor their identity.

A Note to the Reader

Welcome—

I'm so excited that you have chosen to learn about the amazing life of Pauli Murray. You may not have heard of Pauli before, but I hope that when you finish this book you will want to share Pauli's story with others. It might help in reading this story to know a little about the world in which Pauli grew up.

Anna Pauline Murray was born more than one hundred years ago. In the early 1900s, clothing, transportation, and schools looked different. People's differences were not celebrated. Instead, fear and lack of understanding led people to form prejudices and create unfair laws based on race, gender, and even who a person loved. Two examples that made life difficult during this time were segregation and Jim Crow laws. Segregation meant separating people by their skin color or race. Black Americans and white Americans had separate communities where they lived. Restaurants, schools, movie theaters, and swimming pools were all segregated. Water fountains, restrooms, and buses were separated and labeled with one place for African American customers and the other for white American customers.

Jim Crow laws were named after an awkward enslaved character in a popular musical show around 1830. These laws made segregation legal for about one hundred years. Jim Crow

PAULI MURRAY

laws were strictly enforced using fear, the threat of paying large fines, jail time, and harsh, violent treatment. These unfair laws divided Americans in towns and cities across the country. Treatment that discriminated against African Americans became a way of life. Living freely and achieving their dreams was a great challenge.

It was also the case during Pauli's life that women were not treated fairly or as equals. There were jobs women were expected to do and other jobs they were not. Women's voices were ignored. They could not vote, they could not attend some schools, have leadership roles, or earn as much money as men. Women were expected to wear dresses, skirts, and suits. Pauli named the unfair treatment "Jane Crow." The combination of Pauli's race and gender made life twice as hard because of Jim Crow and Jane Crow laws and expectations.

Pauli Murray lived until the year 1985 and dedicated her life to creating change. At the age of seventy-four, Pauli lived long enough to see many of these laws and ways of life changed for both African Americans and women. Pauli Murray fought for equality and freedom using great intelligence, brilliant writing skills, a handy typewriter, and a strong voice to speak out against unfair treatment of all people.

Maybe after reading about Pauli Murray, you'll be inspired to dream about how you will use your gifts and talents to change our world.

Happy Reading!



1 ■ The Beginning

Swirling around us at birth are all the possibilities for what and who we can be. Parents and family hold hopes and dreams for their newborns, anxiously awaiting the gifts they will bring into the world. From the time we are born, we are chosen to be special, unique, and awesome, made in our Creator's image. There is a religious verse, or psalm, that describes this as being "fearfully and wonderfully made." This was all true for Anna Pauline. Full of hope and possibilities, Anna Pauline grew into a truly special person who shared her gifts, shouting for the rights of all people and changing the world.

On November 20, 1910, the world welcomed Anna Pauline Murray. Born in Baltimore, Maryland, she was the child of William Murray and Agnes Fitzgerald. Her father was a public schoolteacher and her mother a nurse. Anna Pauline was the fourth of the six Murray children. The oldest sibling, Grace, was followed by Mildred, Willie, Anna Pauline, Rosetta, and the youngest, Robert Fitzgerald.

PAULI MURRAY

Anna Pauline's life was like a winding path that unfolded before her. The journey had many twists and turns and often was not easy. There were challenges, things that would try to block her path. Helping her along the way were family members, friends, and a number of mentors that would gently guide her throughout her life and keep her focused and moving forward. These guardians would faithfully hold the vision for Anna Pauline that she was indeed someone special.

Sadly, Anna Pauline's mother died when Anna Pauline was only three and a half years old. After her mother's death, Anna Pauline's father was unable to care for the children and sent them to live with relatives. Grace, Mildred, Will, and Rosetta went to live with family members in Baltimore. Anna Pauline moved to Durham, North Carolina, to live with her grandparents—her mother's parents—Robert and Cornelia Fitzgerald, and two aunts, Sallie and Pauline. When Anna Pauline was thirteen, a short nine years after her mother's death, her father was killed.

Anna Pauline was the only child in her grandparents' home. Some of her earliest memories were of being held and rocked by her grandmother. Anna Pauline felt safe and loved, and she always held a special place in her heart for her grandmother. Anna Pauline's parents were kept alive in her memory through stories her aunts and grandparents would tell. There were family pictures on the walls in their home and she was allowed



PAULI MURRAY

to ask endless questions about them. The stories, lovingly told, along with the pictures helped Anna Pauline to know, love, and appreciate her parents.

Anna Pauline shared the same name with her Aunt Pauline. Many times, children are named for a relative who is well loved. Aunt Pauline was her mother's oldest sister and the two sisters had been very fond of each other. Her aunt soon became like a mother to Anna Pauline and later adopted her.

Aunt Pauline was a no-nonsense person. She did not smile often, but Anna Pauline felt loved. Her aunt was firm, yet kind. She had expectations and encouraged Anna Pauline to always work toward her best. Aunt Pauline also helped Anna Pauline see that life had many choices, helping her to understand that choices have consequences, good and bad. Anna Pauline sometimes found out the hard way when she made poor choices and Aunt Pauline did not come to the rescue. Aunt Pauline helped Anna Pauline face difficult choices throughout her life.



2 ■ Faith

Faith was at the center of family life for Anna Pauline. There was a wooden cross over the mantelpiece in her grandparent's home, a place of honor. Many evenings Anna Pauline would read the Bible to her grandmother. At the age of nine, Anna Pauline was confirmed in the Episcopal Church by Bishop Henry B. Delaney, a family friend. He was one of the first two African American bishops in the Episcopal Church. Many years later, Anna Pauline visited Bishop Delaney when he was very ill. She and her aunt said final prayers with the bishop. He called Anna Pauline to his bedside and spoke words that would never be forgotten. Almost as if he were looking into the future, Bishop Delaney said, "You are a child of destiny." Aunt Pauline would hold this vision and remind Anna Pauline of it often.

Anna Pauline continued to honor familiar faith traditions throughout her life. As a youngster, Anna Pauline regularly attended church with Aunt Pauline each Sunday. As a young adult and into adulthood, Anna Pauline continued to attend

PAULI MURRAY

and participate in the work of the church. Anna Pauline did not always agree with the church but always returned to the familiar faith-centered life of her youth.