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April 29th, 2009

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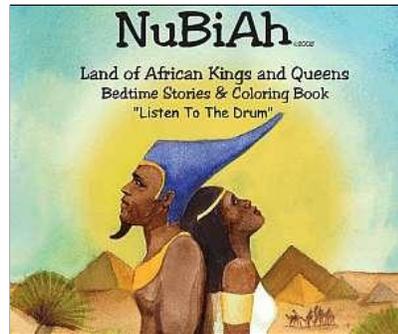
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The Valley of Kings and Dreams

Yemisi Adegoke

April 29th, 2009



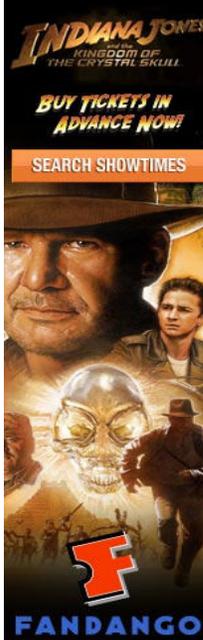
The cover of Tommy Jones children's book Nubiah

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"I grew up in the inner city of South Central Los Angeles in the 80's and 90's," said author Tommy Jones. "It was tough for many of my friends to break free of the ways of the streets...So many children will be lost because they don't understand where they came from."

It was this experience, coupled with concerns about Jones's own nieces and nephews that prompted the advertising executive to write NuBiAh, a new interactive children's book designed to inspire African American children through stories that focus on their heritage, something that Jones is passionate about conveying to the black youth.

"When it comes to teaching quality lessons, we miss a lot of that in the public school system," Jones said. We had nothing [at my school] that taught us about African Americans.

Every black history month I looked for positive programming except Roots. I love Roots [but] Is this it for us? As African Americans is that it? Weren't there great kingdoms where black kings and queens ruled prominent dynasties before slavery?"

These questions were answered for Jones during his college experience at the historically Black Morehouse College, a place he credits with informing him about his culture and background

"We were leaders of the world for a long time," Jones said. We are a great people from a great land, descendants of great Kings and Queens."

By providing this knowledge Jones aims to increase the self esteem and self worth of young African Americans and to ultimately counter troublingly high statistics of incarceration, unemployment and low levels of college graduation within the African-American community.

"The common problem I see with children within the inner city is the same I experienced when I was growing up...the same problems exist in every black community."

Jones said. "The youth have a general lack of self worth, low self esteem, lack of confidence and low motivation...this often leads to a lifestyle of destruction and lower moral standards."

The bedtime story format of the book was a conscious decision made by Jones to ensure active participation from parents. According to Jones, empowerment starts at home but it is up to the community to ensure it is sustained.

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"It is believed in many African villages that it takes a village to raise a child," Jones stated. "Now more than ever we must reach the youth in highly creative ways that they appreciate."

The title "NuBiAh" , comes from the name of the ancient land Nubia, home to one of Africa's earliest black civilizations. The book features information on character,a collection of bedtime stories and illustrations of each of the five characters.

A recurring theme throughout the book is "Listen to the Drum," meaning follow your heart.

"Like the great Kings and Queens, develop a solid value system," Jones explained. "Develop a strong code of ethics, develop a solid moral compass and high respect for mankind and you will be on your way to achieving your dreams."

All the characters in the book are based on real people, Jones said this was the most difficult part of the creative process. " There were numerous schedule conflicts that delayed production time," Jones commented.

"I wanted to make sure that all of the information was 100% accurate..so that when parents read the bedtime stories, they can be assured that their children are learning real values from real people."

So far Jones said NuBiAh is selling well, a portion of all net proceeds go to the Boys and Girls Clubs of America and as a result of the positive response Jones has plans to release similar themed books, as well as a musical CD and a stage play.

"NuBiAh is about understanding your inner greatness," Jones said. "When we know our history and the rich heritage we come from, we can focus on how we are going to make a difference in society."

NuBiAh is available on Amazon.com (ISBN#9 780615 270364)

To find out more visit: <http://www.nubiah.com>

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