

# Breaking the Barriers: An Exhibition in Courage

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## Introduction

It is important that children learn the importance of unity and diversity in our society and, more importantly, learn to embrace and appreciate both our cultural differences and similarities. This packet will provide teachers with an outline and resources to develop pre and post-visit activities for the *Breaking the Barriers* exhibition, and lesson plans that focus on diversity, African American history, overcoming obstacles, prejudice, discrimination and race.

Use the information presented to spark lessons and activities for students in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The **key themes** of this curriculum guide are: diversity, unity, multiculturalism, personal achievement and individuality.

## Teacher Background

The classroom provides a safe environment to discuss such sensitive topics as racism, as does the exhibition. Historical exhibits place the controversies of our past into the proper context, and in doing so, act as an ideal place for a forum, an open place for social dialogue and discourse of ideas that are often difficult to discuss. Similar to the classroom, the *Breaking the Barriers* exhibition has the opportunity to educate the public, as well as the opportunity to house and foster discussion surrounding some of these sensitive issues (such as the role race plays in American history).

As Horton states in her essay regarding the portrayal of African American history; "As one who believes in the power of education, I argue from the premise that knowledge will facilitate understanding and tolerance...if we are to have meaningful conversations on race in contemporary society, we must do so within the context of history." (Horton, 2006: 54).

The lessons we hope you will create through the use of this packet should stress the following objectives:

- Students will understand the following concepts: Racism, Prejudice, Discrimination, and Race.
- Students will appreciate cultural differences as well as similarities.
- Students will increase their awareness about their own individuality, as well as others', and embrace it.
- Students will learn of the importance of acceptance, appreciation, and understanding.
- In keeping with the guidelines of Colorado Academic Social Studies Standards, this packet will teach students about pivotal historical events and figures of The United States and Colorado.

## Standards Addressed

Visiting the *Breaking the Barriers* exhibition and utilizing this curriculum guide, your students will explore the following Colorado Academic Social Studies Standards:

- **Third Grade:**
  - History 2 - People in the past influenced the development and interaction of different communities and regions.
  - Civics 1 – Respect the views and rights of others as components of a democratic society.
- **Fourth Grade:**
  - History 1 - Organize a sequence of events to understand the concepts of chronology and cause and effect in the history of Colorado.
  - History 2 – The historical eras, individuals, groups, ideas, and themes in Colorado history and their relationships to key events in the United States.
- **Fifth Grade:**
  - History 1 – Analyze historical sources from multiple points of view to develop an understanding of historical context.
- **Sixth Grade:**
  - History 1 – Analyze and interpret historical sources to ask and research historical questions.

## Before Your Visit

Prior to visiting *Breaking the Barriers*, teachers will introduce students to the key themes they will explore in the exhibition. Discussing these terms ahead of time will prepare students for a richer experience, and help them understand the trials Arthur Ashe, Althea Gibson, and other African American athletes in the exhibition such as Ora Mae Washington and Dr. R. Walter Johnson faced during their lifetime.

## Vocabulary Terms

Discussions relating to prejudice and intolerance can bring about some new ideas and concepts that young students might be unfamiliar with or have little prior knowledge or understanding. Below is a list of terms adopted from the Children’s Museum in Boston, MA in their exhibit The Kids Bridge, provided by the Smithsonian Center for Education:

- **Diversity:** Diversity is the collective mixture of our human and organizational assets characterized by our similarities and differences.

- **American Tennis Association (ATA):** the oldest African American sports association in the United States founded in Washington D.C. on November 30, 1916.
- **Arthur Ashe:** one of tennis' greatest ambassadors both on and off the court. He was the first African American man to win the US Open in 1968 and went on to win 33 titles in his career including Wimbledon in 1975 and the Australian Open in 1970. Off the court, Ashe worked tirelessly to eliminate racism and poverty around the world, and devoted time to creating tennis opportunities for youngsters from all backgrounds.
- **Althea Gibson:** broke the color barrier when on August 25, 1950, she became the first black person to play in the USLTA National Championships (now known as the US Open), forever changing the sport. Over a superb three-year period, Gibson won 11 Grand Slams, including five singles titles, two at the US Championships in 1957 and 1958. Her courage and dedication extended well beyond the tennis court as she blazed a trail for African American tennis players, and inspired countless others in all walks of life.
- **Stereotype:** a generalization about the behavior, appearance, or other aspects of an entire group of people, such as a racial group or gender. People sometimes base their judgment of an individual on stereotypes rather than on the individual's own characteristics.
- **Prejudice:** an opinion formed without enough knowledge or thought; a prejudgment that is often based on stereotypes rather than on true or complete information. Prejudice, along with racism and other "isms," often leads to discrimination.
- **Bigotry:** intolerant or prejudiced behavior or attitudes toward others.
- **Discrimination:** treatment that favors one person or group over another. For example, women could not vote in many states until a constitutional amendment became law in 1920. Not allowing women to vote was an act of discrimination that favored men over women.
- **Racism:** any action or attitude that allows one race to feel superior to, and to use power over another race. For example, during World War II, some people ostracized Japanese Americans.

When discussing these terms, write the words on the board and ask students to describe what they believe they mean. Encourage students to express and share their opinions and thoughts freely. Ask them to share examples from their own personal experiences or other examples from history or the news media.

## **Student Photo Handout**

Distribute the *Breaking the Barriers* photo sheet to students and share some of the experiences of African American athletes such as Althea Gibson or Arthur Ashe. Both of these great American athletes often faced oppression and ignorance as they strived to excel in a sport dominated by whites.

### **Photograph A – Image of male and female American Tennis Association (ATA) champions/players from 1919**

The ATA was formed for the following purposes:

- To bring colored tennis enthusiasts and players into closer and friendlier relations
- To encourage the formation of new clubs
- To hold annually a recognized, national championship tournament
- To appoint referees and officials for each event
- To promote the standard of the game among colored men.

### **Photograph B – Althea Gibson, Forest Hills**

Althea was the first African American, man or woman, to compete in a Grand Slam event. She is responsible for breaking the color line in a similar fashion as Jackie Robinson. Before she was allowed to compete in the US Nationals (what is now the US Open), she was limited to ATA events. In order to compete in the Nationals with white tennis players she had to succeed in several invitational events. However, because of her skin color she was not invited to compete in such events, and as such she was denied access to the National tournament.

### **Photograph C – Arthur Ashe, 1968 US (Longwood)**

Arthur Ashe was the first African American male to win a Grand Slam. He grew up in Richmond, Virginia at a time when blacks and whites were separated, or segregated. This meant there were special buses, water fountains, bathrooms, movie theaters, etc. for blacks and whites, and these businesses and services were restricted only to one race. One day after a juniors tournament match, Arthur Ashe at the young age of 15 went to the movie theater that evening with a group of white players only to find that the theater was for “Whites Only.” Arthur Ashe was not allowed in and had to wait outside.

### **Photograph D**

Often labeled “colored,” African Americans were restricted to using water fountains, restaurants, hotels, etc. designated for use by African American men, women and children only. Refer students to photo D in student handout. The photo clearly illustrates signs of segregation. A young African American sips water from a fountain clearly labeled “colored.” You can also point out the signs on either ends of the photo.

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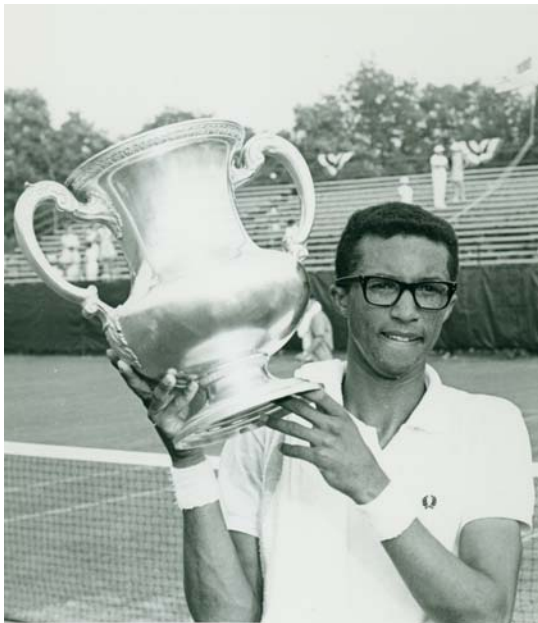


Photo A - © International Tennis Hall of Fame & Museum; Photo B - © World Tennis Magazine Photograph Archives, International Tennis Hall of Fame & Museum; Photo C - © International Tennis Hall of Fame & Museum/Ed Fernberger

## After Your Visit

Follow your visit with a discussion about what your students remember and learned from the exhibition and the engaging classroom activities below. By utilizing the following activities, you will be reinforcing the lessons presented at *Breaking the Barriers*, as well as addressing any questions students might have in relation to the exhibition.

## Discussion Topics

- Breaking Barriers
  - After visiting the exhibition, what does the term breaking the barriers mean to you?
  - What barriers have you overcome in your life?
  - How can you break barriers in your school, community and neighborhood?
- Racism and Prejudice:
  - Discuss with the students some signs of discrimination and prejudice in both the past and the present. Reiterate some of the experiences of Arthur Ashe and Althea Gibson as well as some major themes of the Civil Rights Movement. Ask the students to think about these issues, and question if they are still apparent in society today.
  - Is racism still an issue in American society today? Why or why not? Are stereotypes prevalent in the media?
  - What can you do about racism or prejudice in your community?
- Diverse Societies:
  - American society and culture is so diverse, and it is this diversity we should celebrate. Ask the students how different societies, cultures, and ethnic groups benefit each other?
  - Ask the students to share a little bit about their own culture or heritage.
- African American History and Heritage:
  - Discuss the legacy of such great African American figures as Arthur Ashe, Althea Gibson, and Martin Luther King, Jr.
  - How do you exemplify the ideals of these great men and women?
  - Respond to the following quote by Arthur Ashe. "From what we get, we make a living; what we give, however, makes a life."

## **Activity for Students of all Ages: “Breaking the Barriers Tennis Cards”**

While participating in a *Breaking the Barriers* guided tour, teachers will receive a packet of tennis trading cards. Each card will give additional information and fun facts about the inspirational men and women in the exhibition, as well as highlight African American leaders in the Colorado tennis community such as Charles “Hank” Henry, the “Father of City Park,” and Bonnie Champion, the first female African American tennis umpire in Colorado.

After your visit, use the tennis cards as part of the following classroom activities:

- Ask students to create their own card with a photo or drawing and fun facts about their lives and accomplishments.
- Distribute one card to each student. Ask the students to consider what barriers that individual had to break during their life. Then ask the students to consider what barriers they have broken or may break in their lives. Have the students write or illustrate their thoughts.
- Create a timeline on the board that spans from 1900 to the present in decades. Ask students to place the cards in the decade that matches that person’s tennis accomplishments, or the year they were born.
- Looking at the timeline, ask students if they think any of these players knew or were inspired by one another. Ask students to discuss and/or write about two people who have inspired them or influenced their life.
- Concentration game – ask students to read cards aloud. Divide students into teams and hold up a card to one team at a time. If that team can recall two facts about the tennis legend, they keep the card. The team with the most cards at the end wins.
- Distribute one card to a pair or small group of students. Ask them to spend a few days researching that person and then present to the class additional information they learned about their tennis legend.
- Create a *Breaking the Barriers* bulletin board in your classroom or hallway so others can learn about these important tennis legends and the contributions they made to breaking barriers in tennis and the community.

## Activity for 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Students: “It’s Okay to Be Different”

This is an excellent activity for children in grades first through third. It teaches students that we are all different, and it is okay to be different. In addition, it emphasizes the importance of individuality and our cultural heritage and background. *It’s Okay to Be Different* by Todd Parr illustrates these ideas wonderfully and stresses the importance of accepting our differences and our individuality and to respect ourselves as well as others.

While completing this activity, it is a great time to discuss treating others with respect, especially those who are different than we are. In addition, this activity sets up well for a discussion on how to deal with bullies or children who tease others for being different.

Below is a brief list of definitions and themes to discuss prior to beginning this activity.

- What does heritage mean? What is your heritage?
- What makes us unique?
- What is individuality?

What you will need:

- *It’s Okay to Be Different* by Todd Parr
- Construction Paper
- Crayons, Markers, or Colored Pencils
- Kid Scissors
- Glue Sticks

Directions:

1. Read Todd Parr’s *It’s Okay to Be Different* to the class. Open up with a discussion about our differences, and why it is important to accept our differences and respect others as well as ourselves.
2. Ask the older to students to write about what makes them individuals. Ask them to think about their own heritage, about what makes them special.
3. Have the younger students illustrate something that makes them special or different using the crafts listed above.
4. At the end of the activity have the students share what makes them special with the class. Have them point out what makes others special as well.



## Activity for 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Students: “I Have a Dream”

A wonderful activity for students grades third through fifth that introduces Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech to them in a more personal manner, allowing them to conceptualize and dictate their own personal dreams. It also introduces the students to the importance of King’s speech to the Civil Rights Movement, as well as introduces them to the major themes of the *Breaking the Barriers* exhibit.

### What you’ll need:

- Crayons or Markers
- Kid Scissors
- Construction Paper
- Magazines
- Colored Pencils
- Glue Sticks

### Directions:

1. Read, watch, or listen to and discuss Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech (below). Ask students to describe their dreams and aspirations.
2. Have the children briefly write down their hopes and dreams in their own “I Have a Dream” speech.
3. Once the students finish their writing activity, have them illustrate or create a collage about their dreams using the craft items listed.
4. After the students finish creating their dream speeches and illustrations, ask them to share their dream with the class.
5. Display the children’s artwork, if possible, on a board in your classroom or outside under the heading “I Have a Dream...”

### Resources:

- The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute  
<http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/>
- The National Archives and Records Administration  
<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/memphis-v-mlk/>
- The King Center, [www.thekingcenter.org](http://www.thekingcenter.org)

## **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "I Have a Dream"**

"I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the "unalienable Rights" of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if

the nation returns to business as usual. And there will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom.

We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead.

We cannot turn back.

There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their self-hood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating: "For Whites Only." We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."<sup>1</sup>

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. And some of you have come from areas where your quest -- quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification" -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."<sup>2</sup>

This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with.

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

And this will be the day -- this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning:

*My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing.*

*Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride,*

*From every mountainside, let freedom ring!*

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

And so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire.

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

But not only that:

Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.

From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when *all* of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual:

*Free at last! Free at last!*

*Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!*

## **Activity for 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Students and Older: “We Were There”**

This project will ask students to interview a member of their family, friend or member of the community about their experiences during the Civil Rights movement and their memories of that era.

Before beginning this project, go over the following terms/themes, so that students have an understanding of some of the important terms of the Civil Rights movement, the key figures and leaders, and the major events of the 1950s and 1960s.

### **Key Terms/Themes:**

Segregation

The Montgomery Bus Boycott

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Little Rock’s Central High School

Little Rock Nine

Sit-ins

Non-violence

Civil Disobedience

The Freedom Riders

Ku Klux Klan

Selma-to-Montgomery March

“Jim Crow” Laws

NAACP

Malcolm X

“I Have a Dream” Speech

1964 Civil Rights Act

Rosa Parks

Brown v. Board of Education

During the interview, make sure the students include where he/she was born and when? How old were they during the Civil Rights movement? Did they have a prominent role during the movement?

Have the students ask the interviewee to tell them about their experiences and memories from the movement, and ask them to discuss their memories of some of the key terms listed above. Make sure the students record their responses.

Then, have the students write a biography about the person they interviewed. Upon receiving all the stories, the teacher can compile a bound book entitled “We Were There: Memories of the Civil Rights Movement” for each student.

## Suggested Readings

Biracree, Tom. *Althea Gibson: Tennis Champion* (from the “American Women of Achievement” series). Chelsea House Publishers, 1989.

Boyer, Allen B. *Arthur Ashe and Me*. Perfection Learning, 2003.

Collins, David. *Arthur Ashe: Against the Wind*. Dillon Press, 1994.

Cunningham, Kevin. *Arthur Ashe: Athlete and Activist* (from the “Journey to Freedom: The African American Library” series). Child’s World, 2005.

Davidson, Margaret. *The Story of Jackie Robinson: Bravest Man in Baseball*. Yearling, 1987.

Davidson, Sue. *Changing the Game: The Stories of Tennis Champions Alice Marble and Althea Gibson*. Seal Press, 1997.

Deans, Karen. *Playing to Win: The Story of Althea Gibson*. Holiday House, 2007.

Denenberg, Barry. *Stealing Home: The Story of Jackie Robinson*. Scholastic Paperbacks, 1990.

Dexter, Robin. *Young Arthur Ashe: Brave Champion*. Troll Associates, 1996.

Dingle, Derek T. *First in the Field: Baseball Hero Jackie Robinson*. Hyperion Book, 1998.

Djata, Sundiata. *Blacks at the Net: Black Achievement in the History of Tennis, Volume 1*. Syracuse University Press, 2006.

Gormley, Beatrice. *Althea Gibson: Young Tennis Player*. Aladdin, 2005.

Harris, Cecil and Larryette Kyle-DeBose. *Charging the Net: A History of Blacks in Tennis from Althea Gibson and Arthur Ashe to the Williams Sisters*. Ivan R. Dee, 2007.

Lazo, Caroline. *Arthur Ashe*. Lerner Publications Company, 1999.

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Smith, Doug. *Whirlwind, the Godfather of Black Tennis: The Life and Times of Dr. Robert Walter Johnson*. Blue Eagle Publishing, 2004.

Stauffacher, Sue. *Nothing but Trouble: The Story of Althea Gibson*. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2007.

Time for Kids, eds. *Jackie Robinson: Strong Inside and Out*. Harper Collins, 2005.

Wright, David K. *Arthur Ashe: Breaking the Color Barrier*. Enslow Publishers, 1996.