

Lisel - PLS. see attached letters supporting the idea of honoring Ruby Bridges with the Citizens Medal. We are still waiting to hear from the Civil Rights division at Justice regarding 1) what, if anything, DOJ has already done to honor Ruby

+ 2) their recommendation⁰⁰ on awarding the Citizens Medal to her.

Please let us know if there are any meetings coming up to discuss possible recipients. Thanks!

| Anne (v6-7072)

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November 15, 2000

Girl's Courage Long Ago Inspires Children Today

By DIANE CARDWELL

Forty years ago, a 6-year-old girl named Ruby Bridges marched past an angry mob of segregationists to become the first black child to attend William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans.

For much of that year, white parents kept their children home, preferring no school at all to sharing a room with a black classmate, so Ruby sat alone, learning reading and math with a first-grade teacher she would come to think of as her best friend.



Nicole Bengiveno/The New York Times

Ruby Bridges, one of the children who integrated New Orleans schools 40 years ago, reading to first graders at the Adolph S. Ochs Elementary School in Manhattan from a book about her by Robert Coles.

That story, which inspired a Norman Rockwell painting and a lifelong interest in the morality of children in the psychiatrist Robert Coles, was told again yesterday. This time, it was told by Ms. Bridges herself, to an integrated classroom of about 20 eager and attentive first graders at Public School 111, the Adolph S. Ochs Elementary School, in the Clinton section of Manhattan.

An outgrowth of Scholastic Reads, a program in which employees of Scholastic, the children's publishing and media company, read and supply books to public elementary students throughout the city, yesterday's event marked the 40th anniversary of Ms. Bridges' civil rights contribution.

"I like to share my story with children, and they are amazed by the story," said Ms. Bridges, who travels the country talking about her experiences and has formed a foundation to promote tolerance.

"I think they are able to put themselves in this little girl's place, and to relate to that child and to think about how they would feel going to an empty school and having no friends."

Inside the classroom, the walls were festooned with the children's work, much of it dedicated to Ms. Bridges. Drawings inspired by the children's reading of "The Story of Ruby Bridges," by Dr. Coles, who met her shortly after she entered William Frantz Elementary, hung from a cord across the room like Christmas lights.

The captions, written by the students, read: "I learned to make friends with my teacher," or "I learned to be brave" or "I learned that you have to believe in yourself."

The names of some of the students tell the story of how far things have come since Ms. Bridges was a first grader: Francisco, Jasmine, Chloe, Megan. The neighborhood is ethnically mixed, predominantly Irish, Hispanic and black, and the school reflects that, said Sheri Donovan, the principal.

Waiting for Ms. Bridges to arrive about 1 p.m. and dwarfed by the presence of about a dozen journalists, the children at first sat neatly on the floor, in "movie theater rows," well back from the chair reserved for the guest of honor.

"She's not used to people touching her feet like I am," the teacher, Jennifer Klingher, told the class.

But as soon as Ms. Bridges entered, the rows were abandoned and a happy pandemonium erupted, with a few of the children questioning whether she was really the girl in the story.

"I am Ruby, but I'm Ruby all grown up," Ms. Bridges said good-naturedly. "Watch. When you get older, you're going to look different, too."

After shaking each child's hand, she proceeded to read "The Story of Ruby Bridges," again and again emphasizing that it is about a little girl changing the law, "so all you guys could go to school together."

"Isn't that great?" she said.

Throughout the reading, students pointed out their favorite pages in the book or sang out answers to Ms. Bridges questions.

"Why are they yelling at Ruby?" a girl named Jasmine asked when

Ms. Bridges paused on an illustration depicting her, escorted by federal marshals, braving a screaming crowd outside her school.

"Why are they yelling at Ruby?" Ms. Bridges asked the class.

"Because they don't want a black kid in their school," another girl, Jasmin, answered.

Later, when Ms. Bridges stopped on a page depicting her class alone with her teacher, one student asked what the teacher was doing.

"Teaching me my numbers," she responded before asking, "Do you do that in this class?"

As the children clamored to answer "Yes," one boy began counting, rapidly and under his breath, without pause until he passed 30.

After finishing the story, Ms. Bridges asked the students if they could have done what she did.

"Yes," they cried.

"You wouldn't have been lonely?"

"No," came the chorus, as one girl explained, "I have my teddy bear in my backpack."

When it was the students' turn to ask questions, they wanted to know more about Ms. Bridges. Does she have children (yes, four sons) and where does she live (New Orleans).

At the end, after showing the children her own book, "Through My Eyes," published by Scholastic last year, and talking about how she came to write it, one boy, Ashanti, sat quietly with his hand stretched high, waiting patiently to be called on by Ms. Bridges.

Ashanti had spent most of the session on the periphery of the group, sitting on Ms. Donovan's lap or with his head on a pillow, but now he had something to say: "Thanks for changing the law."

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JIMMY CARTER

October 30, 2000

To President Bill Clinton

I am pleased to endorse the nomination of Ruby Bridges for the Presidential Citizens Medal. Her entrance in the all-white William Frantz School in 1960 marked the beginnings of her life of service to her country and fellow citizens. Among her numerous credits, Ms. Bridges is an inspiring spokesperson to schoolchildren and their parents and teachers, sharing with them the many rewards that come from respect and tolerance for all our neighbors. The Presidential Citizens Medal is a well deserved recognition of Ruby Bridges' extraordinary life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jimmy Carter".

The Honorable Bill Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Marshals Service

Office of the Director

Arlington, Virginia 22202-4210
October 25, 2000

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I whole-heartedly support the Scholastic Incorporated's nomination of Ms. Ruby Bridges as a recipient of the Presidential Citizens Medal.

As you know, in 1960 Ms. Bridges attended her first day of school in the all-white New Orleans' William Frantz school – alone. She had to be escorted by United States Marshals in order for her to attend school. This event initiated the integration of the New Orleans public schools and was the first courageous act by this six-year-old girl.

Since then, Ms. Bridges has dedicated her life to ending segregation and has become a champion of children's education. She continues to speak to thousands of schoolchildren, parents, and teachers each year about the importance of tolerance and respect for all cultures. She continually emphasizes that schools can be a place to bring people from all races and backgrounds together.

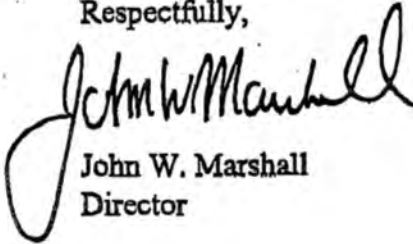
In 1994, Ms. Bridges founded the Ruby Bridges Educational Foundation which assists needy students, improves school facilities, and encourages parental involvement. She championed the slogan of her foundation – "Racism is a grown-up disease . . . let's stop using kids to spread it."

Recently, the Deputy Attorney General of the United States bestowed Ms. Bridges with the title of Honorary United States Marshal. It was a personal honor for me to participate in this historic ceremony. We are proud that Ms. Bridges is now officially a member of the United States Marshals Service family.

An Accredited Law Enforcement Agency

Ms. Bridges is a United States citizen who has performed exemplary deeds of service to the United States and her fellow citizens. It is for these, and the many other accomplishments of Ms. Bridges, that I believe she is most deserved of the Presidential Citizens Medal.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John W. Marshall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

John W. Marshall
Director



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site
450 Auburn Avenue, N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30312

IN REPLY REFER TO

October 26, 2000

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Clinton:

I am writing in support of the nomination of Ruby Bridges as a recipient for the Presidential Citizens Medal, as sponsored by Scholastic Inc.

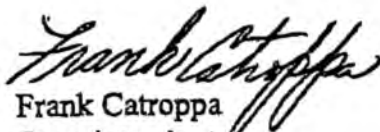
Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site unveiled a new exhibit, "Children of Courage," in January 2000. The exhibit, designed for children, explores the effects of segregation and the Civil Rights Movement upon young people in the past and challenges them to continue the struggle for equality today.

In the "Young Soldiers of Freedom" section, the exhibit profiles six young people who were involved in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 60s. Additional students will be highlighted in the future. Ruby Bridges was selected to be included in the first six profiles because of her courageous actions in 1960 that integrated New Orleans' William Frantz School and ultimately all New Orleans' schools.

Ms. Bridges was a featured speaker at the dedication of the exhibit in January. She also shared memories and insights into her experiences with elementary students who attended the dedication. She was a gracious and eloquent spokesperson for the young participants in the Civil Rights Movement.

Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site enthusiastically supports the nomination of Ruby Bridges as a recipient of the Presidential Citizens Medal.

Sincerely,


Frank Catroppa
Superintendent

LOUISIANA

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CHIEF DEPUTY WHIP

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WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1803

October 25, 2000

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The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Clinton:

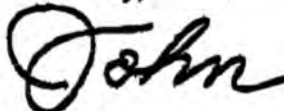
I write in support of Ruby Bridges' nomination for the Presidential Citizens Award.

When Ruby Bridges was just six years old, she became a foot soldier in the most insidious battle in America's history -- the struggle for equality among the races. A young African-American, she was ordered to enter the all-white William Frantz public school in New Orleans on the morning of November 14, 1960. Federal Marshals escorted the little girl inside past a screaming mob of protesters. That day and for months after, little Ruby faced the clamorous jeering segregationists as she made her way to class.

The inner strength and courage that Ruby displayed back then are still evident today in her ongoing quest to promote tolerance and respect for all people and cultures. She travels the country as an advocate for improving education for all students. She is the author of a children's book and the subject of other books, as well as a Disney feature film, that attempt to tell her story. She remains an inspiration to all of us as we continue to deal with aftermath of years of segregation.

You have had great success in maintaining an administration that includes capable professionals from every background. Your attention to the ongoing struggle for civil rights has made us a stronger nation. Ruby Bridges has spent her life promoting ideals such as these. This November marks the 40th anniversary of Ruby's first entrance to the school. I can think of no better way to commemorate the occasion than by honoring Ms. Bridges with a Presidential Citizens Award. I hope you agree.

Sincerely,



JOHN BREAUX
United States Senator

JB/mem

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1804

October 25, 2000

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Clinton:

The purpose of this letter is to recommend Ruby Bridges for the Presidential Citizens Award.

Ruby Bridges is a monumental figure in New Orleans civil rights history as the first student to integrate our schools at the William Frantz School in November of 1960. The image of her first day is captured by Norman Rockwell and her story is told through books and movies thus passing on her tale of bravery to our children.

She has gone on in her adult life to continue to advocate those beliefs that gave her the courage she needed that day. Ruby is a prominent speaker on improving schools and education all over the country. Her foundation, The Ruby Bridges Educational Foundation, assists needy students, improves school facilities, and encourages empowerment through meaningful parental involvement.

I am proud to say that Ruby Bridges is not only someone whose story I find inspiring, but she is also my constituent and someone who continues to dedicate herself to the highest ideals of citizenship. Ruby's four decades of service and dedication to equal opportunity and education improvement make her a deserving nominee for the Presidential Citizens Award.

Please give her your most careful consideration.

With my kindest regards, I am

Respectfully yours,



May L. Landrieu
United States Senate

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS
MARC H. MORIAL
MAYOR

October 27, 2000

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Clinton:

It is with great pleasure that I recommend Ms. Ruby Bridges for the Presidential Citizens Award.

Ms. Bridges has been an inspiration to many by showing extraordinary courage and strength throughout her life. As a young six year old child, she faced adversity head on by being the first African American to attend an all white school in New Orleans.

As captured by Norman Rockwell's painting, "The Problem We All Live With," we see a young child full of grace and dignity being escorted by U.S. Marshals through a mob of screaming segregationists on her first day of school at William Frantz School in New Orleans on November 14, 1960.

Decades later, Ruby continues to speak to thousands of schoolchildren, parents and teachers each year about the importance of tolerance and respect for all cultures. She has founded the Ruby Bridges Educational Foundation, which assists needy students, improves school facilities and encourages parental involvement.

In 1995, Ruby and her story became the subject of the best-selling children's book by Dr. Robert Coles entitled "The Story of Ruby Bridges." She herself has written a book entitled "Through My Eyes". It has earned numerous awards, including the 2000 Jane Addams Children's Book Award and a 1999 National Parenting Publication Award. The book is nationally acclaimed by publishers, educators and parents alike.

It is therefore without reservation that I humbly recommend Ms. Ruby Bridges for the Presidential Citizens Award. Please give her your fullest consideration.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

With warmest regards, I remain,

Yours very truly,



Marc H. Morial
Mayor

MHM/cf

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WILLIAM FRANTZ ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

3811 N. GALVEZ STREET
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70117

October 31, 2000

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Subject: Recommendation of Ruby Bridges for a Presidential Citizen's Award

Dear President Clinton:

As Principal of William Frantz School, the school Ruby Bridges integrated in New Orleans on November 14, 2000, I write to heartily second the nomination of Ruby Bridges for a Presidential Citizen's Award.

Miss Bridges was a tiny child of six years when she bravely, calmly, and with a touchingly Christian spirit, walked through a mob of screaming, jeering segregationists for the first of many times on November 14th, 1960. Her acts of bravery initiated the end of legal segregation in New Orleans, yet her goal each day was to get to school so that she could learn.

However, this was not simply the poignant, moving beginning of an amazingly brave little girl's school career, it was the beginning of Ruby Bridges' courageous ongoing journey in behalf of tolerance and respect for all people and cultures.

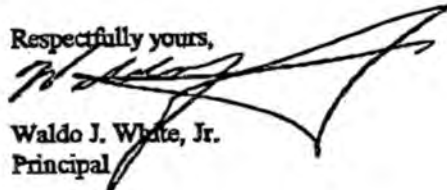
We, at Frantz School, are deeply proud to be part of Ruby Bridges' journey, and proud of her many accomplishments as an education advocate, a speaker on the national stage, and a best-selling author. Her foundation works to assist needy students, improve school facilities and promote the empowerment of families through meaningful parental involvement.

I am proud to say that as Principal of William Frantz School, where integration was inaugurated in New Orleans, I find Ruby Bridges' story an inspiring one for all Americans. She stood for the right thing and she walked through a kind of hell every day for months to accomplish an important change.

Ruby's four decades of effort for equal educational opportunity and for tolerance and appreciation of differences between cultures, make her a perfect candidate for the Presidential Citizen's Award. I believe she symbolizes the very ideals for which the award was created.

With my appreciation for your great work as President, I am

Respectfully yours,


Waldo J. White, Jr.
Principal



Chicago Historical Society

Chicago Historical Society
Clark Street at North Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60614-6099
Phone: 312-642-4600
Fax: 312-266-2077

November 1, 2000

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, North West
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Clinton,

I'm so delighted to have this opportunity to nominate Ruby Bridges for the Presidential Citizens Medal. Ruby's courageous actions as a 6 year old integrating Franz School in New Orleans have been inspiring children and adults for forty years. Her bravery continues to impact thousands of children across North America through her Educational Foundation, her book "Through My Eyes", the Disney movie of her life, and perhaps most importantly, through the presentations that she gives at schools and cultural institutions like the Chicago Historical Society.

Ruby's selfless dedication to public service is evidenced in the fact that for the past five years, she has spent two and half weeks of every month on the road; giving presentations, signing books, encouraging teachers, parents and students to end racism. Ruby's work is heartfelt and touches so many American's lives. At her work's core is a passion to heal the past and make the United States a fairer, more just place in which to live. With all this in mind, I strongly recommend that you consider Ruby Bridges for the Presidential Citizen's Medal. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marie Scatena Haugh". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Marie Scatena Haugh
Public Historian
Chicago Historical Society



Chicago Historical Society

Chicago Historical Society
Clark Street at North Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60614-6099
Phone: 312-642-4600
Fax: 312-266-2077

November 1, 2000

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, North West
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Clinton:

When I think of a citizen of the United States of America who has performed exemplary deeds of service for their country or fellow citizen, Ruby Bridges come to mind unhesitatingly or with little or no thought. Ruby's bravery and choices make her an ideal candidate for the prestigious Presidential Citizens Medal.

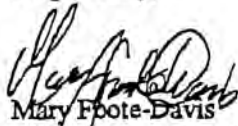
Ruby began taking extraordinary risks in choices in 1960 when she attended her first day of school at the then all-white New Orleans 'William Franz School' alone. Surrounded by U. S. Marshals, Ruby was escorted through a mob of screaming angry segregationists. This choice of action initiated segregation in the New Orleans Public Schools. This choice was also the beginning of Ruby's courageous ongoing journey, sharing her experience in 1960 at the age of six at the William Franz School and her message of tolerance and respect for all cultures throughout the country. Ruby speaks to thousands of school children, parents, and teachers. She is now a parent volunteer at the William Franz School.

In 1995, Ruby and her story became the subject of a best-selling children's book entitled, the *Story of Ruby Bridges*, written by Dr. Robert Coles and Published by Scholastic. Her own 199 book, *Through My Eyes*, was named a Publisher's Weekly Best Book of the Year. It garnered numerous awards, including the 2000 Jane Addams Children's Book Award and a 1999 National Parenting Publication Award. This book is nationally acclaimed by publishers, educators, and parents. Ruby's story has been captured on film and featured on ABC's *The Wonderful World of Disney*. Norman Rockwell portrayed the chilling moments of Ruby's first day at William Franz School in his painting *The Problem We All Live With*.

Ruby's central theme is "Racism is a grown-up disease...let's stop using kinds to spread it!" The response of school children educator's and other adults to Ruby's recent talk at the Chicago Historical Society was overwhelmingly enthusiastic.

Mr. President, I nominate Ruby Bridges for the prestigious Presidential Citizens Medal.

Respectfully,





Mary Foote-Davis
Chicago Historical Society

212 343 6701 P.12/26
 44 Vynell Street
 Boston MA 02132
 October 25, 2000

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
 President of the United States
 The White House
 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
 Washington, DC 20500

"And crown thy good with brotherhood
 From sea to shining sea."

Dear President Clinton,

How stunningly  treasured words became on a recent Cape Cod morning when  from the home of Katherine Lee Bates, who gifted our nation with America, The Beautiful, stood Ruby Bridges imparting the same message to yet another rapt audience of hero-adoring children and adults. The scene this day was the Eight Cousins Book Store on Main Street in Falmouth, by its idyllic Town Green. But, be the setting a quiet little New England town on the Atlantic shore or a bustling city scene on the Pacific coast, the response of her audiences is universally the same. Through her historic story and her inspiring message Ruby leaves her listeners with a deeper and a heightened sense of brotherhood, its riches for us as individuals and for us, as a nation.

How special it was that this historic spot could claim the presence of two great American women: Katherine Lee Bates, a native New Englander of European heritage and a Wellesley college graduate; Ruby Bridges, a daughter of the deep South, of share-cropper parentage and a high school graduate, yet each able to move a nation with a shared vision of an America enabled by the gifts of true brotherhood.

Such is the magic of America!

Thrilled as I was that August day by the pervasive excitement and enthusiasm that had engulfed the usually casual atmosphere of my summer-vacationing town in anticipation of Ruby's visit, I was little surprised, for my past experiences appearing with her before national and international conferences of educators in major cities across our country and my telling of our story to students in schools throughout New England had well taught me about such outpourings of feelings: admiration, appreciation, respect, honor that ever surround her.

So wonderful and so gratifying is the fullness of recognition given Ruby Bridges, today. So different it was 40 years ago - on a day designated "D" day by New Orleaners - November 14, 1960, when from the protective arms of the Federal Marshals I greeted a beautiful little black girl, and taking her accepting hand in mine, Ruby Bridges and I began our year-long, solitary journey at the William Frantz school; a school quickly emptied of its students by their prodigious, protesting parents; themselves, then, unknowing victims of the evils of segregation and racism, intent on denying Ruby and all black children of New Orleans for whom she was the symbol, the full rights and privileges our Constitution granted to all of America's citizens.

Indeed how special it is for me to see that the nation now knows what only I knew so well, in 1960, that Ruby Bridges was a child of extra ordinary gifts of character. Each day began at school with what seemed a miracle, for after her making her way to the front door along a walk edged with all the cutting cruelties of a racist mob, she would appear in our room as if some guardian angel had just placed her there, and she would greet me with her gentle smile and those big beautiful brown eyes filled with a gleam of wonder for whatever discovery our trip for two would hold for us. With a courage of heroic proportion and strengthened in faith and trust by a loving family, Ruby was able to accomplish with quiet dignity every goal of her historic mission - to successfully initiate the desegregation of the New Orleans school system and to secure for all its children an equality of opportunity in education, long denied.

Through her personal attributes of character and her public victory over racism, Ruby Bridges has justly become a seminal figure in our history of the struggle for Civil Rights. But, to America's children, Ruby will forever be the exquisite little black girl of Norman Rockwell's design, with all of its evocative reflections.

Ruby is every child's hero and ideal, one with whom each child loves to identify, and for whom there is endless empathy. She is an active, powerful force for social justice in our children's lives. For adults: some still owned by the indelible, ugly public images, broadcast world-wide, of New Orleans, 1960; others informed by their studies of our Civil Rights history, Ruby Bridges is an ever present reminder of our obligation to grow in our understanding and our appreciation of our differences.

Through Ruby's charismatic presence we are strengthened in our commitment to social justice; and by her empowering faith and vision challenged to make Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream a reality, and ready to joyfully sing from our hearts, "This land was made for you and me."

I offer you, President Clinton, my former student and now America's pre-eminent teacher for social justice as an outstanding nominee for the 2000 Presidential Citizens Medal.

With high hopes for Ruby, and with deep appreciation for all you have done to promote social justice during your presidency, I extend good wishes for your future.

Sincerely,
Barbara Henry



Harvard University
University Health Services
75 Mt. Auburn Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

10/27/00

Dear President Clinton,

I write with as strong as possible enthusiasm and conviction on behalf of a consideration of Ruby Bridges Hall as a candidate for the Presidential Citizens Medal. Through chance and circumstance I became a witness to what Ruby (as I came to call her) endured in an effort to get an education as an African American girl in an all white New Orleans school, The Frantz School, starting in the Fall of 1960. I watched her as she braved heckling mobs every day, and nevertheless maintained an extraordinary dignity—even praying for those who wanted to kill her! I've described her and her travails and her enormous compassion (again, even for those who wanted to hurt her) in much of my writing and most especially in Children of Crisis: A Study of Courage and Fear, and also in The Moral Life of Children and The Spiritual Life of Children. For so many of us Ruby was an inspiring American hero—a six year-old African American girl of humble background, who persevered: for a while she attended a completely boycotted school surrounded by threatening mobs every day, and nevertheless prevailed morally and psychologically. She always told me how much she loved this country, even as she was escorted by Federal Marshals just to get to school. I think she deserves the enthusiastic gratitude of all of us Americans for what she so gracefully accomplished—the onset of school desegregation. If I may quote Federal Judge J. Skelly Wright, who ordered the desegregation of New Orleans' schools, and with that order Ruby's entrance into a previously all-white school: "She helped this country become a better country—no matter the constant threats to her life. She was a brave child who did so much for so many".

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Robert Coles'.

Robert Coles, MD

James Agee Professor of Social Ethics, Harvard University

Richard Robinson
CEO, President & Chairman

SCHOLASTIC INC.
555 Broadway
New York, NY
10012-3999

(212) 343-6700

October 27, 2000

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Clinton:

I am writing to lend my strong personal support for the nomination of Ruby Bridges as a recipient of the Presidential Citizens Medal.

As the publisher of both Robert Coles', *The Story of Ruby Bridges* and Ruby's own book, *Through My Eyes*, I have had the benefit of getting to know Ruby and her many contributions personally. Given Ruby's role in history and her continuing efforts in the area of race relations, I believe Ruby embodies the meaning behind the Presidential Citizens Medal.

As you know, 40 years ago, on November 14, 1960, six-year-old Ruby Bridges made history when she walked into a formerly all-white school, the William Frantz Elementary School. Surrounded by U.S. Marshals, Bridges was escorted through a mob of screaming segregationists and initiated the integration of the New Orleans public schools. This milestone in Civil Rights history was so powerful that it moved Norman Rockwell to portray that historic moment in his painting *The Problem We All Live With*. To commemorate the 40th anniversary of that day, Ruby was recently made an Honorary U.S. Marshal.

Ruby's courage and strength, from forty years ago to today, is truly inspiring for children and adults of every race. When she speaks all across the country about her personal experience, she focuses on the importance of tolerance and respect for all cultures and helps to broaden the minds and hearts of her audiences. She emphasizes that schools *can* be a place to bring together children and young people of all races and backgrounds. Ruby now spends her time speaking to children in their schools.

Her dedication and life-long work to eliminate racism and prejudice in our society has been unyielding. To that end, Ruby started the Ruby Bridges Educational Foundation in

1994 to assist needy students, improve school facilities and get more parents involved in their children's education. Through education and educational programs, the Foundation serves as a national vehicle to emphasize and promote the values of tolerance, respect and appreciation for cultures other than one's own.

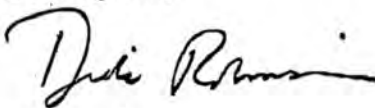
In fact, Ruby has spearheaded the effort to designate the neglected William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans as a "Save Americas Treasures" project in hopes of preserving it for the many more children to come. In volunteering at the school, she has developed close personal ties with the principal of Frantz Elementary, Waldo White and with the Superintendent of New Orleans, Colonel Al Davis.

In addition to the many awards and honors she has personally received, her book, *Through My Eyes*, has been nationally acclaimed as a book that, "advances humanitarian ideals and serves as an inspiration to young readers". Published in 1999, it has won multiple highly acclaimed awards. (see attached list)

As you can see, similar to the Little Rock Nine, Ruby's actions as a young child have had a powerful effect on our society. It seems more than appropriate to honor the 40th anniversary and Ruby for her heroic behavior in 1960 and her tireless work with children today. As Robert Coles, a Pulitzer Prize-winning Harvard professor of social relations and psychiatry who spent three years with Ruby as her counselor during that time, has said, "Ruby had enormous dignity and courage. Now she's trying to help a new generation who face different struggles."

If I can provide you with any additional information in this matter, please let me know.

Best regards,



Dick Robinson

Through My Eyes Awards and Recognition

- 2000 Children's Book Council Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People
- 2000 Riverbank Review Children's Book of Distinction
- 1999 *Publishers Weekly* Cuffies books of the Year-Best Autobiography
- *School Library Journal* Best Books of the Year
- Booklist Editors' Choice
- *Bulletin for the Center of Children's Books* Blue Ribbon Books
- *Publishers Weekly* Best Books of the Year
- The Smithsonian's Notable Books for Children
- 2000 Orbis Pictus Award
- 1999 Flora Stieglitz Book Award
- 1999 National Parenting Publication Award
- Spring 2000 Children's Books of Distinction
- Winter 1999 National Association of Parenting Publications Gold Award
- 2000 National Council of Social Studies/Carter G. Woodson Book Award
- 2000-2001 William Allen White Children's Book Award
- 2000 Jane Addams Children's Book Award

NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE



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October 27, 2000

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Clinton:

I am writing on behalf of the National Urban League to express the organization's support of Ms. Ruby Bridges as a nominee for this year's Presidential Citizens Medal.

When Ms. Bridges took her historic walk into the William Frantz School some 40 years ago, she helped this nation to begin tearing down the walls of segregation that separated our society.

Since then, her many and varied accomplishments have helped to further the creation of a society based on equality of opportunity, and free from prejudice.

Please accept this letter of support into your process of consideration.
Thank you.

Sincerely,



Hugh B. Price
President



The WALT DISNEY Company

Michael D. Eisner
Chairman and CEO

October 24, 2000

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing on behalf of the nomination of Ruby Bridges to receive the prestigious Presidential Citizens Medal.

As you probably know, forty years ago, on November 14, 1960, six-year old Ruby Bridges walked tall into a New Orleans all-white school accompanied by Federal Marshals. The Marshals cleared her way through an angry mob. She attended school alone – that day, and for months afterward. This was not just the beginning of a young child's school career; this was the beginning of Ruby Bridges' extraordinarily courageous, ongoing journey.

Decades later, Ruby began sharing her message of courage and strength throughout the country. She continues to speak to thousands of school children, parents and teachers each year about the importance of tolerance and respect for all cultures. She emphasizes that schools *can* be a place to bring people together – kids of all races and backgrounds. In 1994, Ruby founded the Ruby Bridges Educational Foundation. It assists needy students, improves school facilities and encourages parental involvement. In addition, Ruby has become an award-winning author with her *Publisher's Weekly* Best Book of the Year winner, Through My Eyes.

There are few Americans, indeed, who can claim to advance humanitarian ideals and serve as an inspiration for generations to come. That is why I wholeheartedly endorse Ruby Bridges' nomination as a recipient of the Presidential Citizens Medal.

Sincerely, yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MDE', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Michael D. Eisner

MDE:bh

Office of Literacy and Outreach Services
American Library Association
50 East Huron
Chicago, IL 60611-2795

The logo features a large triangle on the left side. Inside the triangle, the letters 'ALA' are at the top, 'SoCial Responsibilities' is in the middle, and 'Round Table' is at the bottom. The 'C' in 'SoCial' is larger and more prominent. The text is in a bold, sans-serif font.

ALA
SoCial Responsibilities
Round Table

October 24, 2000

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

"Dear President Clinton"

I am writing to you as Chair of the Coretta Scott King (CSK) Task Force in support of the petition to nominate Ruby Bridges as a recipient of the prestigious Presidential Citizens Medal. For the past thirty years the CSK Task Force has presented an *Award of Excellence* to the writer and illustrator of a book for youth. The CSK Award seeks to recognize the depiction of positive black experiences in children's literature that commemorate the ideas and dreams for America envisioned by the late Martin Luther King Jr., husband of the award's namesake.

The CSK Task Force has been especially interested in Ruby Bridges through the inspiration her life has given to young readers of literature for children. The Task Force has viewed with praise several titles chronicling her life. The Awards Committee has welcomed to the body of quality literature the best-selling children's book by Dr. Robert Coles (*The Story of Ruby Bridges*) and her autobiography, *Through My Eyes* (Scholastic, 1999). *Through My Eyes* has received several notable recognitions. It has been named a Publisher's Weekly Best Book of the Year; given the 2000 Jane Addams Children's Book Award, and awarded the 1999 National Parenting Publication Award.

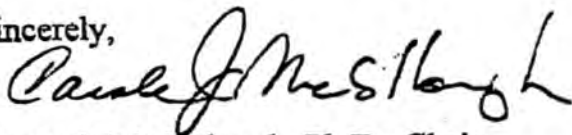
Ruby Bridges' courage and bravery initiated the integration of the New Orleans public schools. This memorable event, captured by Norman Rockwell on canvas, and published as a *Life Magazine* cover, remains to this day etched in the memory of people of all racial denominations and cultures throughout the world. Decades later, Ms. Bridges' advocacy behavior demonstrates the respect, integrity, and commitment to service to her fellow citizens, particularly youth. To this end Ruby Bridges has personally delivered

messages of strength and courage to youth audiences throughout the country. Her belief in the power of tolerance and respect of all cultures has been the singular message she has brought to thousands of school children. Her advocacy activities bring focus to the elimination of the scourge of racism.

Ms. Bridges believes that education is key to respectful cultural coexistence in America. Evidence of her passionate conviction to this principle is the founding of the Ruby Bridges Educational Foundation in 1994. The foundation provides needed assistance to low income families so children in these families can attend school every day. The Foundation supports improvements in school facilities and works to empower parents to become involved in their children's education. Additionally, Ms. Bridges has returned to the *William Franz Elementary School* as a volunteer and activist working to preserve and renovate the school as a historical treasure.

November 14, 2000 marks the 40th anniversary of that memorable day when six-year-old Ruby Bridges, escorted by U.S. Marshals, walked tall through the taunts of an angry all-white crowd. The extraordinary journey begun on that fateful day has been a model to hundreds of thousands of children and adults alike. As the Chair of the Coretta Scott King Award Task Force I believe the most fitting tribute to the exemplary lifetime service and humanitarian commitment of Ruby Bridges is the Presidential Citizens Medal. I heartily endorse the nomination of Ruby Bridges for this award.

Sincerely,



Carole J. McCollough, Ph.D., Chair
American Library Association
Social Responsibilities Roundtable
Coretta Scott King Task Force



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Lynda Johnson Robb, *Chairman*
William E. Trueheart, *President and CEO*

October 25, 2000

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C 20500

Dear President Clinton:

I write to you today to support the nomination of Ruby Bridges as a recipient of the prestigious Presidential Citizens Medal. Ms. Bridges has been a tireless champion of children's literacy for many years, starting as a child when Federal Marshals escorted her into the William Frantz School in New Orleans, Louisiana and continuing throughout her life she has made the education of children a personal crusade. She has served as a national spokesperson for education, founded the Ruby Bridges Educational Foundation to assist needy children, and garnered numerous awards for her wonderful book, "Through My Eyes."

As comfortable as she is with business leaders, Ruby is equally at home with children. She is a great team player and a wonderful and gracious combination of workhorse and showhorse! Ruby is as personally generous on kids' behalf as she is dedicated and committed to advancing a national agenda for literacy. Several years later it was Ruby's commitment to education that led her to return to the William Frantz Elementary School where she spearheaded an effort to designate the neglected school as a "Save America's Treasures" project in hopes of preserving it for many children to come. Forty years of her time, talent, and treasure should not be overlooked, but rather become a national model to ensure that all America's children are literate.

I am honored to support and endorse the work and life achievements of Ms. Ruby Bridges. I personally know the spirit in which this prestigious award was created, and I respectfully ask you for another memory— a memory of Ruby Bridges as a recipient of the Presidential Citizens Medal!

Respectfully yours,

Lynda J Robb

RIF

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October 26, 2000

The Honorable William Jefferson Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20200

Dear President Clinton:

It is an honor to write to you to recommend that you formally honor Ms. Ruby Bridges by awarding her a Presidential Citizens Medal this year.

As chair of the 2000 Jane Addams Children's Book Award Committee, it was my honor to present Ms. Ruby Bridges with this year's award for her book "Through My Eyes," an outstandingly written book effectively promoting the cause of peace, social justice and world community. Anyone interested in finding out more about this award is invited to visit <http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/public/jaddams.htm> where there is more information about this annual children's book award sponsored by the Jane Addams Peace Association. Although confidentiality keeps me from reporting about the balloting and other background details about the committee's decision-making process, I can assure you that "Through My Eyes" was a hands-down favorite choice of the national committee making this selection after evaluating many other strong contenders.

In meeting Ms. Bridges personally and hearing her respond to questions from the young members of the audience during the Jane Addams Awards event in New York City on October 20, I was struck with how articulate she is, and how clearly she can respond to questions about racism in general and about her experiences with racism in particular. I was also struck by the fact that in her formal acceptance remarks and informal conversations that day, Ruby Bridges conveyed the demeanor of a role model, a mentor, a woman who miraculously was not so damaged by her harsh experiences as a child that today she cannot give back with love to children in America. She herself seems to be a miracle as a human being, as she invites children to think about how they can each make a difference, and how it isn't necessary to aspire to becoming a famous entertainer or athlete in order to be a good citizen and to have a productive, happy adult life in America.

It is very inspiring to be in the company and presence of Ms. Ruby Bridges. Her impact can become for this generation and those in the future somewhat like what Ms. Rosa Parks became for all of us - young and adult - during the 20th century. Having the great honor of being a recipient of the Presidential Citizens Medal can help to make that happen and to make Ruby

Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC)
A Library of the School of Education

Bridges, this great citizen, have an even greater impact upon Americans during the 21st century.

The citizens of our nation are of all ages, as well as being diverse in many ways. It's rare to consider the actions of a six-year-old child as deserving of an honor as great as what this medal stands for, but little Ruby Bridges' courage deserves it. She steadfastly walked past adults shouting hateful epithets at her every school day throughout a full school year, and she did this with necessary federal escorts in order that the New Orleans public schools would become integrated according to federal law. She attended school in a classroom where she was the only child - and a very lonely one who ached for child companions and did not understand why there were no children with whom to learn and play. Fortunately this child had a teacher who wanted to teach her, and because of that, young Ruby learned firsthand that all white people did not hate her. And she learned. Her grades that year were exemplary, even though in the future others attempted to lower her official record to show differently. Children usually do not have to fulfill what adults are intended to accomplish. Ruby Bridges did what was asked of her. She made a difference.

Robert Coles and others wrote and talked about Ruby Bridges and other "children of courage;" millions of adults have read his works citing her courage, and countless young people see and read and see his children's book "The Story of Ruby Bridges" published in 1995. Norman Rockwell's painting of Ruby's "long walk" into school daily is embedded into the memory of millions today. In writing her own account of her experience as a child and her growing understanding of the significance of what she accomplished on behalf of all African Americans - indeed, on behalf of all Americans - during the year she was six, she is already making an enormous difference. Her efforts to make certain that the William Frantz Elementary School is designated as an important national treasure demonstrate her understanding of the larger import of her place in American history. By establishing the Ruby Bridges Educational Foundation six years ago, she has found a formal way to assist children, their parents, and school communities requiring help in achieving and/or providing the opportunity for education all children in our nation can expect to have as their right. What she is doing as an adult with the "celebrity" of her childhood also makes her deserving of the Presidential Citizens Medal.

I commend Ruby Bridges - the former child and today's adult - a very courageous citizen - to your attention, Mr. President.

Sincerely,



Ginny Moore Kruse, Director
Cooperative Children's Book Center, University of Wisconsin - Madison
and
Chair, 2000 Jane Addams Children's Book Award Committee

**UNIVERSITY OF
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**Ginny Moore Kruse, Director
Cooperative Children's Book Center
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