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INDIGENOUS GULLAH FOLKLORE PRESERVED WITH NEW CHILDREN'S BOOK

DC author/illustrator duo uses African-American Southern folklore to encourage cultural literacy for kids

WASHINGTON -- Two Washingtonians will introduce children and families to Gullah folklore and the African-Diaspora with the release of their third children's book. In honor of Juneteenth -- an annual U.S. celebration recognizing abolition of slavery in America -- Callaloo Kids media brand (a product of Sepia Works, LLC) is releasing *Callaloo: The Trickster and the Magic Quilt* on June 19th.

Author, Marjuan Canady, and illustrator, Nabeeh Bilal attended Duke Ellington School of the Arts, a DC Public School/Arts Magnet and alma mater to many acclaimed entertainers from the region. For the last 5 years, the Callaloo children's media brand has traveled the country sharing original stories and performances with young audiences about African-American and Caribbean folklore.

The book centers on Zoe and her friend Winston as they travel to the Lowcountry in Beaufort, South Carolina in hopes of recovering the missing patch to her grandma's quilt. Families will learn traditional Gullah/Geechee language, about the significance of quilting in southern culture. There's even reference to former Howard University Professor Lorenzo Dow Turner's contribution to Gullah cultural studies.

In their research for the book, Bilal and Canady traveled to Beaufort, SC to identify key landmarks, conduct visual research, and conduct interviews with natives of the Gullah islands in South Carolina.

"I noticed many African-American children enjoyed our stories celebrating Caribbean-American folklore, but they often verbalized how they felt African-Americans didn't have their own. After some research and discovery, we made the decision to focus on celebrating the beautiful oral traditions, food culture, quilting and storytelling of the Gullahs. *Callaloo* encourages children to not only explore other people cultures, but to discover and appreciate their own as well, it just so happens that food is a great place to start", says Canady.

The book is appropriate for children ages 3-7 and features an empowering foreword by Paula Whaley (Visual artist and sister of the great James Baldwin.)

The book launch is scheduled for Saturday, June 30 from 2:00pm - 4:00pm at Sankofa Video Books & Cafe (2714 Georgia Ave NW, Washington, DC 20001) and will feature a live performance of the book and a book signing with the author and illustrator. The group will continue to perform and conduct signings throughout the east coast region on the Callaloo Kids Summer Book Tour from July 1st-August 18th.

For more information please visit [www. Callalookids.com](http://www.Callalookids.com).

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