

## Book review: “Forward from this Moment”

Written by Terri Schlichenmeyer

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So, what do you think? Go ahead. Spill your mind. You have something to say about the economy, politics, local infrastructure, road conditions, today’s youth, TV programs, the weather, your favorite team’s quarterback, some guy overseas, troops overseas, and the music that’s on the radio. You might as well just speak your mind because it seems, these days, everybody has an opinion.

And some of those opinions are so moving, so dead-on mindful that you can’t help but be stunned by their common-senseness. Read “Forward from this Moment” by Leonard Pitts, Jr., and you’ll see what I mean.

Fifteen years ago, Leonard Pitts, Jr., who was the music critic for the Miami Herald, tired of his job. He asked for a re-assignment and – to his surprise – they gave it to him by making him a general interest columnist, which means “they pay me to write about whatever happens to be on my mind at any given time,” Pitts says.

This book, a “labor of guilt” for not having compiled those columns already, is his cumulative result. And over the years, there was plenty on his mind...

In hoping for a child’s future: “You want so much for your kids. Possibility renews itself through children. You see things in their eyes ... As a parent, you are the guardian of all that. It’s hard to imagine a more daunting responsibility.”

On perceived “disrespect” and African American young men: It is, they’ll tell you, an issue of respect and they guard that respect to the point of extreme behavior... [But] They don’t get it. The cold fact is, the world does not operate according to the mores of hard streets. If one seeks to get ahead, one adapts to society, not the other way around.”

“You want respect? Real respect? Bump the dumb stuff. Keep your eyes on the prize.”

On “colorblindness”: “I can appreciate the frustration of white Americans whose only desire where race is concerned is to know what’s OK, what’s allowed...”

On gay rights and African Americans: “How can we of all people, we who know the weight of American oppression better than almost anyone, stand in the path of those who seek simple equality?”

Agree or disagree, you’d have to go a long way to find a book that makes you fall in love with words and ideas more than does “Forward from this Moment”. Author Leonard Pitts, Jr. speaks his mind eloquently and quite often with tenderness but, overall, to heck with anyone who’s rankled.

Politicians, ignoramuses, world leaders, and heroes are all up for examination in Pitts’ world, and it’s abundantly clear that he means exactly what he says. And in case there’s any doubt that Pitts is a man of conviction, he includes several columns that reply to and answer his detractors their put-him-on-the-spot comments.

“Forward from this Moment” is a book to find and to savor and it should be on the bedside table

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of every thinking person. In my opinion, it’s one of the finest books you’ll read this year.

“Forward from this Moment” by Leonard Pitts, Jr.

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