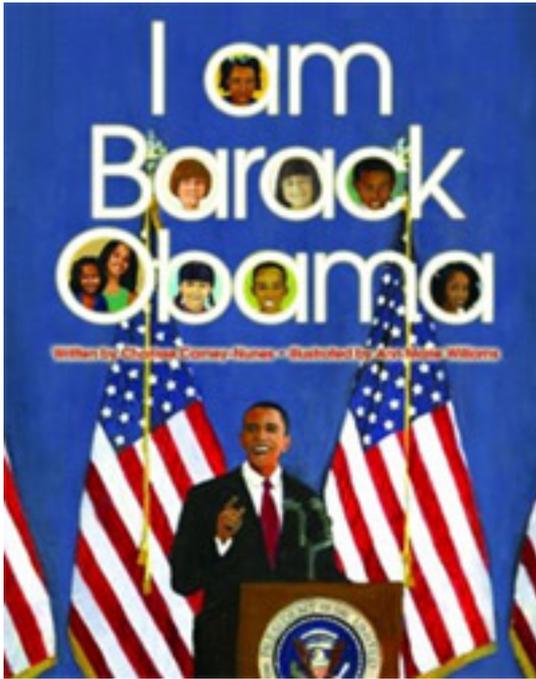


## Book review: I am Barack Obama

Written by Kam Williams  
Friday, 05 June 2009 16:46

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“This book tells a story of how a child can change the world. It creates a space where children can experience the extraordinary life of President Barack Obama while imagining the possibilities for themselves. I am Barack Obama includes accounts of children already using this inspirational moment in history to imagine their futures in compelling ways, as captured by the powerful statement, ‘I am Barack Obama.’”

- Excerpted from the Preface (page 3)

Barack Obama’s ascendance to the Presidency was undoubtedly moving

to anyone old enough to have endured Jim Crow segregation during those shameful days before black folks were allowed basic human rights like access to restaurants, hotels or even the voting booth. Understandably, it might now be satisfying enough for elders who suffered such indignities simply to sit back and bask in the reflected glory of Obama’s historic achievement.

But that feat ought to have a very different meaning for children growing up today. For given Barack’s rise from some rather humble roots, his life story of beating the odds should serve as an inspiration to them and to impressionable young minds for generations to come that they can turn any dream into reality, however big, however improbable.

That’s precisely the message of I am Barack Obama, a priceless biography of our new President by Charisse Carney-Nunes, a mother of two who designed it for kids still in their formative years. In the preface, we learn that the author also happens to know her subject personally, having attended Harvard Law School at the same time as Obama. In fact, there’s even a picture of them together, taken in April of 1991.

The tome’s uplifting narration, written in a bouncy rhyme, is not so much strictly about Barack as about the incredible potential inside each and every one of us which is waiting to be unlocked.

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But the book's beautiful illustrations by Ann Marie Williams do feature familiar tableaux of Obama at every stage of his development, from learning to ride a tricycle all the way to his finally standing at a podium in front of the President Seal.

Fitfully, *I am Barack Obama* closes with over a dozen testimonials by children representing a diversity of ethnic backgrounds. Each one essentially affirms, as 10 year-old Raequan eloquently puts it, "No matter where you come from, when you put your mind to it, you can do or be anything."

What more proof do you need that times have certainly changed?

*I am Barack Obama* by Charisse Carney-Nunes  
Illustrated by Ann Marie Williams  
Brand Nu Words  
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36 pages, illustrated  
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