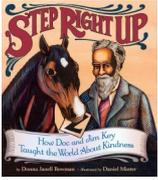


Staff Picks: Step Right Up by Donna Janell Bowman



[view in catalog](#)

Reviewed by Christina J.

You have to read it to believe it. Then you have to see the photos in the historical note at the back of the book to really believe the incredible story of William "Doc" Key and his intelligent horse Beautiful Jim Key. Even people who witnessed it firsthand, including scholars from Harvard University, couldn't understand how Doc Key managed to teach his horse how to read, spell, cipher, and more on command. This is a stunning and inspiring story of how kindness and love has the potential to unleash the intelligence and capacity in animals, during a time when most people believed animals had no feelings. William "Doc" Key lived an extraordinary life in rural Tennessee during the time of the Civil War. Born into slavery, Key learned healing arts from his mother and became known in the area as a highly talented animal doctor, earning him the nickname, "Doc." After an eventful tour in the Civil War, Doc built a thriving business as a newly free man. That's when he nursed a sickly colt to life and made him a household name. Doc Key used his fame and influence to shine a light on racial inequity by refusing to have segregated seating at his shows and performing in traditionally white venues. Along with his stance on social justice, Doc also crusaded for the humane treatment of animals. Truly, Doc Key's story is an inspiration to us all.

*This book was an honoree for the Carter G. Woodson Book Awards for the most distinguished books appropriate for young readers that depict ethnicity in the United States. Adjudicated by members of the National Council for the Social Studies (a professional teaching organization) this award is intended to encourage the writing, publishing, and dissemination of outstanding social studies books for young readers that treat topics related to ethnic minorities and race relations sensitively and accurately.?

Posted by Alejandria G. on February 19, 2019

Oh, the Things You Can Think

African American

Animals

Diversity

Historical

Horses

Step right up: how Doc and Jim Key taught the world about kindness
