

Power Read 25 Launches Claiming Black Women's Place in the American Story

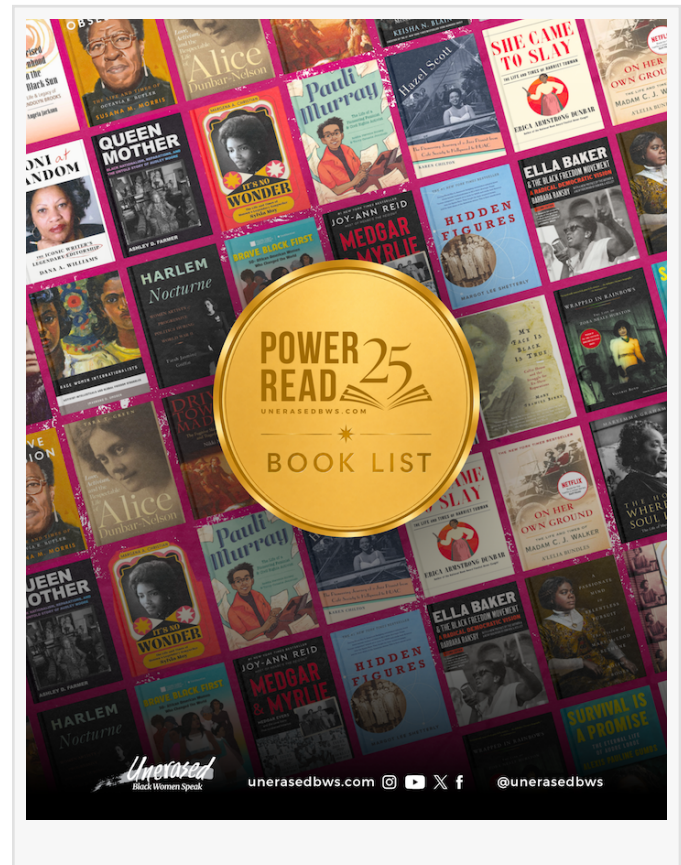
Unerased | Black Women Speak launches Power Read 25, a national civic engagement and reading initiative.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, July 29, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Unerased | Black Women Speak](#) launches [Power Read 25](#), a national civic engagement and reading initiative built on a simple but transformative notion: the story of America cannot be fully understood without reading about the lives of Black women. A curation of 25 biographies written by and about Black women, Power Read 25 invites communities across the country to read, discuss and reflect on the people whose lives have shaped our democracy, imagination and future.

Power Read 25 was spurred by the National Endowment for the Arts "Big Read 250" initiative celebrating the nation's 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The NEA list of 24 titles was absent any Black women authors. Rather than protest, Unerased committed to produce its own reading initiative centering the contributions of Black women to the American story.

"The best response for us was to 'unerase' the exclusion," said Gwen McKinney, founder of Unerased | Black Women Speak. "Black women have always been authors of this country's history — not only through the books they've written, but through the lives they've lived."

The inaugural Power Read titles span more than two centuries of American life, illuminating enslaved resistance, Reconstruction, the Harlem Renaissance, civil rights, the Black Power movement, and contemporary leadership. Some of the biographies feature well-known protagonists like Harriet Tubman and Zora Neale Hurston, while others, warriors and change agents in their own right, have remained largely outside the public imagination. Together, all 25 titles offer a richer, more complete portrait of America itself. Additional companion titles are



designed to encourage literacy among young readers.

Power Read 25 was shaped by a respected Advisory Committee of authors, scholars, journalists, educators and civic leaders who evaluated works for literary quality, historical significance, diversity of experience and potential to spark public engagement — alongside recommendations submitted by the public.

Acclaimed Author and Hurston/Wright Foundation co-founder Marita Golden put the committee's guiding question plainly: "Are there people who need a spotlight? I think it's important to include books that tell stories about Black women that may not have received much attention...This introduces new subjects, new titles, and new authors."

The 10-member advisory committee included Summer Tate, a Howard University Ph.D. candidate and scholar of African American literature; Cassandra Brown, Florida voting rights advocate and cofounder of All About the Ballots; Marcia Davis, award-winning journalist and former Washington Post and NPR editor, and others. The group delivered sharp instincts, striking a balance between inclusion of iconic and overlooked figures.

Power Read 25 Project Director Tracy Chiles McGhee emphasizes, "Power Read 25 seeks to enlist activation partners — individuals, libraries, classrooms, literary groups, book clubs — to expand the reach and depths of the project through their participation."

For The Power Read 25 list and other details visit [Power Read 25 - Unerased](#)

About Unerased | Black Women Speak

Unerased | Black Women Speak is a national public engagement initiative dedicated to amplifying Black women's voices, stories and cultural contributions. Through narrative development, public convenings and community-centered programming, Unerased advances a more complete understanding of American history and strengthens the role of storytelling in civic life.

Media interviews, photo opportunities and select on-site access to Power Read 25 events are available upon request.

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