



Works You Should Read from the Black Writers Whose Names Were Added to the Library Limestone

April 4, 2022 by Educator Barnes

Central Library's entry has famous writers' names engraved into the limestone. I was not shocked to learn that the majority of those names consisted of white males. In an effort to diversify the engraved names, the Indianapolis Public Library added ten Black authors' names.

The 300 suggested additions were narrowed down to ten authors. I encourage people to read at least one book, poem, or play by these writers. Below, I have included their names and at least one composition they wrote that I enjoyed. I also added two that I plan to read this year.

Maya Angelou

Book – "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings"

Poem – "Still I Rise"

James Baldwin

Book – "The Fire Next Time"

Short Story – "Sonny's Blues"

Frederick Douglass

Book – "Narrative Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave – Written by Himself"
(always in my top ten book list)

Speech – "What to the Slave is the 4th of July?"

W.E.B. Du Bois

The Journal of Negro Education Article – "Does the Negro Need Separate Schools?"

Book – "Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept"

Paul Laurence Dunbar

Poem – "A Negro Love Song"

Poem – “The Colored Soldiers”

Poem – “Ode to Ethiopia”

Poem – “We Wear the Mask”

Langston Hughes

Poem – “Dream Boogie”

Poem – “Harlem”

Poem – “I, Too”

Poem – “Mother to Son”

Poem – “Motto”

Poem – “The Weary Blues”

Zora Neale Hurston

Book – “Barracoon: The Story of the Last ‘Black Cargo’” (will read this year)

Short Story “The Gilded Six-Bits”

Toni Morrison

Children’s Book – “The Big Box”

Book – “Beloved” (will read this year)

Phillis Wheatley

Poem – “On Being Brought from Africa to America”

Poem – “To S.M., a Young African Painter, on Seeing His Works”

Richard Wright

Essay - "Blueprint for Negro Writing"

Book - "Native Son" (will read this year)

Although this is a step in the right direction for the library, I hope that more diverse names are added. Where are the Asian authors? Where are the Latino authors? Where are the Indigenous authors? We do live in INDIANA. When people enter the library, they should feel like they are welcome, and the names engraved in the limestone at the entry are part of that.