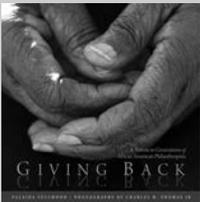


The Face That Launched a Thousand Days



[Guest Blogger: Valaida Fullwood,](#)
[award-winning author](#)

Valaida Fullwood will be in Indianapolis in the fall of 2014 as the [Lake Distinguished Visitor](#). More information to come.



[Giving Back](#)

by Valaida Fullwood

[Contact Us](#)

25,000 words
392 manuscript pages
76 quotes from the ages
200 narratives on what it means to give back
180 portraits of everyday Black philanthropists
4 centuries of an American legacy rooted in Africa
999,999 reasons to give
1 book that reframes portraits of philanthropy

Muse seems a fitting description for Aunt Dora. Hers is the face that launched a thousand-day odyssey and twenty-five thousand words. The generosity of my 92-year-old great-aunt inspired me to embark on developing the book *Giving Back: A Tribute to Generations of African American Philanthropists*. *Giving Back* is a 400-page hardcover publication filled with revealing stories and artful photography about traditions of giving within Black communities. In prose, poetry and portraiture, my great-aunt's philanthropy and that of 199 other benefactors of African descent fill every page.

When the idea for the book took hold of me, little did I know that seeing it through and publishing it would require a high-wire walk of faith, spanning four-and-half years or one thousand days-well, 1621 days to be exact. With each day that passed, the vision for *Giving Back* grew so clear it haunted me. The pathway, however, grew obscured by episodes of frustration and weariness.

On those clouded, dark days, brightening my steps like bursts of light from a beacon were the narratives and biographies of the people I was chronicling. In a twist, the volume of stories that I was inspired to start writing had come to speak volumes to me and thus supplied inspiration to complete the book. Being immersed in accounts of "lovers of humankind"-their aspirations, motivations and tribulations-compelled me to push on.

Fittingly, the story of my original source of inspiration and great-aunt, Rev. Dora Atlas, opens *Giving Back*. After reading "Rich Aunt," indeed, you will see that she is a great aunt in deed. The book's collection of stories and photographs forever altered my thinking and my work in philanthropy, and I expect it could have the same effect on you.

Shared here is a TEDx video of my faith-fueled story of philanthropy, identity and epiphany that produced *Giving Back*.

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Join the discussion



Insights by Valaida Fullwood

[VIDEO: A Picture Reframed](#)



Personal Identity & Finding Philanthropy: Charles Thomas and Valaida Fullwo...

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