

The Story Behind The Author



E.D. Arrington

Determined, confident, self-assured, and a relentless never-say-never drive are all characteristics ascribed to E. D. Arrington by her closest friends. If she had any fears, she didn't show them. If she had any wounds, she

didn't reveal them. If she had any doubts, she held them close to the vest, giving no one reason to suspect them. So few, not even those closest friends, knew the whole story...until now.

At first glance, Arrington's life journey mirrors thousands of African Americans raised in the rural South by a loving, nurturing, patient grandmother and a devoted grandfather who provided for his family off the meager earnings as a sharecropper. At second glance, Arrington's life journey mirrors thousands of African Americans who lifted themselves out of poverty to a comfortable middle class existence – an existence that she, throughout her childhood, had seen on a black and white television set that only occasionally spotlighted people with her skin color. But it was enough to ignite her hope, to fuel her inherent drive, and to give reason for a third glance at the road Arrington traveled.

"I was born in Greene County, North Carolina, the fourth of seven children. My mother died when I was seven years old – that day I remember clearly. Until his death, my father never publicly acknowledged me as his daughter, though I met him once. I was adopted by my grandparents, Tom and Eva Brown-Arrington, when I was in the fourth or fifth grade – maybe younger. Though the date didn't matter as long as I could remain with them – not shuffled off to a foster home as was strongly urged by a social worker. My grandparents were so giving, so loving, so very committed to me. I never experienced the emotional void of not

having biological parents until after they were gone. My grandfather died in 1966. My grandmother died in 1968. That's when I realized how big this world was. I was fifteen years old and didn't have a clue how I was going to survive. All I had to draw from was the well of steel determination instilled in me by my grandmother. She was incredible. One of her favorite sayings was: *We've gotta keep moving forward. No matter how tough times get, we've gotta keep moving forward.* And that's what I did. It was all I knew how to do. But I didn't know where I was going. I would end up at a place and make the most out of it. Sometimes things worked out. Sometimes they didn't."

"You see, for me, quitting is not an option."

In 1992, Arrington, a woman whose worst sick days were battling a week-long bout of the flu, was stricken with a neurological disorder that baffled and continues to baffle doctors, (and she has been treated by the best – Mayo Clinic, Georgetown Hospital, Suburban Hospital, Duke University Medical Center, and the list goes on). If there was a perfect time to give up, life had handed Arrington a good *excuse*. Blinding nystagmus, an unstable gait, and dizziness forced her to live within the confines of her Silver Spring, Maryland home. Yet, instead of throwing in the towel, Arrington decided it was time to write.

"I didn't accept what doctors told me...that most people they had treated with my condition only got worse. But just in case they might have gotten it right...this time, I wanted to tell my daughter my story in my words. I didn't want to make my exit leaving her with as many unanswered questions about her parents as I had about mine. So, I moved into my den next to my computer and began to write everything I could remember about my life [that I would put on paper].

"Opening my eyes hurt so badly, I cried the entire five-minute stints at the computer. [Constant fatigue required frequent rest periods.] Because I knew the keyboard as well as the back of my hand, I wrote with my eyes closed. It took me eight months to finish my story, *The Road We Traveled*. [I only shared it with family.] But what I discovered was that writing transported me to another world. A world where I wasn't sick. A world where I could run, jump, and dance. And I wanted to go back to *that world*. Since there was nothing more to write about me, I made up a story, and another story, and another story."

Arrington did more than make up stories. She wrote book-length sagas. In 2000, she moved back to her roots – Wilson, North Carolina, a small town not far from her birthplace. In 2004, at the end of an almost identical neurological episode, Arrington published her first novel, *Stay The Course*, to an overwhelming positive response. In March 2006, Arrington released her second novel, *On The Edge*, and *Words Of Comfort*, her first collection of poems and inspirational writings. I didn't have to ask Arrington how she managed to chronicle three different genres of books while living with her ailment, because I am not just her publicist. I am one of those close friends who witnessed firsthand, more than thirty years ago, the determined, confident, self-assured, young woman with unrelenting never-say-never drive.

We've gotta keep moving forward. "I can't count the number of times in my adult life I heard my grandmother ("Ma") whisper those words to me," Arrington said, "and each time I was inspired to try a little harder. Once I told my best friend, Fredricka Johnson, that I wanted my gravestone to read: *Ethel Made The Most Out Of Every Day. She Loved To Live And She Lived to Write.*' You see, for me, quitting is not an option."

To read more about Arrington and her books, visit www.edarringtonbooks.com.