**Theme Information for Youth and Adult Artists\***

**THEME - ART INSPIRED BY AUTHOR PATRICIA MCKISSACK**

Art submissions should be inspired by or related to any theme present in any work written by Patricia McKissack OR on the theme of “connection.” Submissions will be judged on the basis of originality, technical quality, and connection to theme.

Ms. McKissack wrote more than 100 children’s books. **Examples of themes in McKissack’s works:** Freedom, the supernatural, poetry, quilting, the library, mothers and sons, slavery, Africa, the Underground Railroad, Christmas, Louisiana, runaways, southern roots, friendship, Civil War, gardening, Negro Baseball League, segregation, the power of words, truth, Harlem, Smyrna, Nashville, baseball, family, love, storytelling, generosity, racism, ghost stories, whaling, history and much more!

If your submission is a new work that was inspired by one of McKissack’s works – great! Art work *related* to a McKissack theme or book will also be accepted. Examples – a painting that you did last year of a flower relates generally to the theme “gardening” and a painting of mother and son relate to the theme “family.” If you want to submit, but have questions or concerns about the theme please contact Melissa Scott at melissa.scott@townofsmyrna.org

**About the Author**

Patricia McKissack was born to parents Robert and Erma Carwell in Smyrna, Tennessee in 1944. She attended high school in Nashville and later received a bachelor’s degree in English from TSU before moving to Missouri and obtaining an M.A. in child education from Webster University. She taught junior high English and worked as an editor until realizing in 1971 that she wanted to be an author.

McKissack, both solo and with her late husband Frederick McKissack, wrote over one hundred children books that drew on the rich tradition of storytelling in her Tennessee family. She is among the most prolific children’s authors on African-American history, folklore and stories. She often wrote about African-American history and her experiences growing up in the racially segregated south. Her books have been translated into dozens of languages. Along with her husband, McKissack was the 2014 recipient of the prestigious Coretta Scott King-Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement, given by the American Library Association. McKissack was also the recipient of nine Coretta Scott King Awards, the 1993 Boston Globe –Horn Book Award, the 2001 Virginia Hamilton Literary Award, and a Newbery Honor. In 2017 the world of children’s literature mourned the loss of McKissack, who died in 2017 in St. Louis at the age of 72.

McKissack was inspired to be a writer by her mother who read poetry to her (especially the poetry of Paul Dunbar) and by her father and grandparents who told her many stories. The characters in these stories were always smart and brave, characteristics often present in McKissack’s later works. Her books were adored by people all over the world, and did much to champion diversity in children’s literature. McKissack once stated that her goal as a writer was to improve the self-image of African-American children, as well as encourage children of all races and cultures to have an open attitude toward people who are different from them.

Following is a summary of just a few books by McKissack. A list of selected works can be found at the links below. McKissack also wrote under the name L’Ann Carwell.

[htps://www.encyclopedia.com/children/academic-and-educational-journals/patricia-c-mckissack](https://www.encyclopedia.com/children/academic-and-educational-journals/patricia-c-mckissack)

<https://bcbooksandauthors.com/author-spotlight-patricia-c-mckissack/>

*(1) A Song for Harlem (Scraps of Time) ­*– a historical chapter book about a young girl who travels from Smyrna, TN to Harlem to attend a summer writing program for gifted young writers.

*(2) The Dark-Thirty: Southern Tales of the Supernatural*- original, short and ghostly stories set in the American South with brief historical introductions. Recipient of a Newbery Honor and a Coretta Scott King Award

*(3) Porch Lies: Tales of Slicksters, Tricksters, and other Wily Characters –* A companion book to *The Dark Thirty.* Entertaining stories that draw on African American oral tradition and blend history and legend with sly humor, creepy horror, villainous characters, and wild farce. McKissack based the stories on those she heard as a child while sitting on her grandparents' porch in Tennessee.

*(4) Goin' Someplace Special* - poignant story of growing up in the segregated South. Details a young girl’s first trip to the library. Based on true events of a trip by the author to the Nashville Public Library. Winner of a Coretta Scott King Award.

*(5) What is Given from the Heart* – the final picture book from McKissack. A powerful story about compassion and the joy of giving.

*(6) Paul Lawrence Dunbar – A Poet to Remember*- A biography of the turn of the century black poet and novelist whose works were among the first to give an honest presentation of black life. When McKissack was a child her mother read Dunbar’s poetry to her. This book was the first book written by McKissack with her husband Fredrick.

(7) *A Friendship for Today –* Based on McKissack’s experience in her 6th grade glass in Kirkwood Missouri

(8) Sojourner Truth: Ain’t I a Woman? – The award-winning biography of Sojourner Truth – preacher, abolitionist and activist for the rights of African- Americans and women.

(9) *The Clone Codes– (*A collaboration between McKissack, her husband Frederick and their son John. A series of 3 books, including *Cyborg* and *The Visitors) –* A sci-fi trilogy set in 2170 about an underground abolitionist movement fighting for the freedom of cyborgs and clones. Through time travel, advanced technologies, and artificial intelligence, this book asks what it means to be human and explores the sacrifices an entire society will make to find out.

Many titles, including *The Clone Codes, What is Given from the Heart, The Home-Run King, Never Forgotten, A Song for Harlem, Away West, Goin’ Someplace Special, and Where Crocodiles Have Wings are available at the Linebaugh Library.*

Youth and adult artists are encouraged to submit art that relates to the theme. Although not a requirement for submission, relation to theme will be a factor in the selection process. \*Theme requirements do not apply to submissions from veterans.