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Photos, videos, and other press materials for *A GATHERING OF VOICES* can be found [here](#).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The Longwood Writers Workshop

Debuts New Anthology

A GATHERING OF VOICES

**By Denise Billings, Charles Floyd Johnson, Denise Nicholas,
Otto E. Stallworth, Jr., MD, GW Williams, and Hattie Winston**

Foreword by Phylicia Rashad

LOS ANGELES (March 28, 2025) – Authors Denise Billings, Charles Floyd Johnson, Denise Nicholas, Otto E. Stallworth, Jr., MD, GW Williams, and Hattie Winston (collectively: The Longwood Writers Workshop) are pleased to announce the debut of their new book, ***A GATHERING OF VOICES*** (Longwood Publishing LLC; ISBN: 979-8-35097-182-8 [Print]; ISBN: 979-8-35097-183-5 [Kindle]; \$24.95 Paperback; \$9.99 Kindle). In this anthology, the six authors share a varied collection of personal, vibrant, introspective, and lyrical stories. These stories resonate with memories of struggles they've waged, of battles they've won and lost, and of their many experiences that illuminate their mature wisdom and their hard-won resilience. Featuring a foreword by Tony Award-winner Phylicia Rashad, ***A GATHERING OF VOICES*** is available now on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Book Baby and at LongwoodWritersWorkshop.com.

In the Spring of 2018, Actress/Author Denise Nicholas gathered a group of interested writers in forming a writing workshop named Longwood Writers Workshop. She brought on board Denise Billings, Charles Floyd Johnson, Otto E. Stallworth, Jr., MD, GW Williams, and Hattie Winston. Nicholas shared her knowledge of the writing process and brought to the group the skill she had exhibited in her first novel, the award-winning *FRESHWATER ROAD*, a book that was born in the Journeyman's Writing Workshop run by Writer/Teacher Janet Fitch. The Longwood Writers Workshop's members were interested in both memoir and fiction writing for ***A GATHERING OF VOICES***; however, most of the authors settled on

memoir as it gave them a starting point using their own life's experiences. The group began meeting bi-weekly at Nicholas' home to write together. And then in March 2020, the COVID-19 lockdowns required The Longwood Writers Workshop to gather less frequently via Zoom. As the pandemic ebbed, the group returned to in-person sessions around Nicholas' dining room table. The authors came to realize what writers all over the world have always known: writing is rewriting and rewriting once again. **A GATHERING OF VOICES** is the result of six writers, all with different stories, examining universal truths of their varied lives.

The first book signing event for **A GATHERING OF VOICES** will take place on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 3:00 p.m., at the Nate Holden Performing Arts Center (4718 W Washington Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90016). Tony, Drama Desk, and NAACP-nominated actor Rocky Carroll (CBS's *NCIS*, Broadway's *The Piano Lesson*) will moderate a discussion with the authors.

To reserve complimentary tickets, visit <https://bit.ly/AGatheringofVoicesBookLaunch>. Books will be available for purchase at the event.

The compelling narratives in **A GATHERING OF VOICES** speak to all ages of readers who are looking for confirmation that the challenges and adversity presented by life's struggles can be overcome with hard work, a never-ending belief in oneself, and the willingness to persevere through every hardship.

"A moving, varied anthology."

- **Kirkus Reviews**

*"Hats off to the Longwood Writers Workshop! **A GATHERING OF VOICES** is an amazing collection of personal, vibrant, introspective and lyrical stories from a diverse group of dedicated artists/survivors/storytellers. Their stories unfold with grace, humor, and hard-won truths."*

- **Rocky Carroll**, Actor and Director, *NCIS*

"Six gifted artists, seasoned by heartache and joy, share their passionate stories in this moving anthology, revealing the depth of their emotional experiences and their resilience in transcending pain and disappointment to discover true happiness, friendship, and faith. These stories reflect lessons from the past that inspire us to claim the dreams of the future. They maneuver through personal and political battlefields with love and determination. In the end, these stories remind us that memory is indeed long and therein lies its power to overcome even the most formidable obstacles. I highly recommend."

- **Jeff Stetson**, Author of *THE MEETING* and *BLOOD ON THE LEAVES*

"A powerful collection of compelling narratives that are both granular and global, inviting us into an intimate connection with exceptionally well-drawn characters who provide a larger-than-life-take-away - the full rich, multidimensional life of Black America."

- **Christopher D'Angelo Benson**, Associate Professor, School of Journalism, Northwestern University

*"**A GATHERING OF VOICES** is the perfect title for this stirring anthology from half-a-dozen perspective writers whose unique voices speak universal truths. These powerful stories resonate with memories of*

struggles waged, of battles won and lost, and of the painful experiences that forge wisdom and clarity. Highly recommended."

- **Paul Levine**, Author of the *Jake Lassiter and Solomon v Lord Series*

"I'm so impressed with the collection of stories and memories from this group. Their impact was educational, disturbing, and hopeful all at the same time. The members of the Longwood Writing Group bring readers into their lives via vivid remembrances. I found myself wanting to know what I'd read next."

- **Elaine Spooner**, Author of *Outside The Spotlights: Conversations With Unsung Creators Behind the Screens in Hollywood*

About the Authors:

Denise Billings

Born and raised in St. Louis Missouri, Denise Billings earned a B.A. in Psychology at Lincoln University, Missouri. She's been a union representative, a fundraiser for non-profits and a bookstore owner. Previously, she contributed articles to several publications including *Before, During & After the 'C' Word* an anthology. Her recently published first book, *Road Trip: A Memoir* was a finalist for the 2024 Black Authors Matter TV Award. She has a son, a bonus daughter and son-in-law and lives in Los Angeles with her fourth and final husband noted actor Earl Billings. Currently she's working on her second book. For more information on Denise Billings visit:

Website: www.denisebillings.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DeniseBillingsAuthor>

Instagram: @neciebug Threads: neciebug@threads.net

Charles Floyd Johnson

Charles Floyd Johnson is both a television and film producer with a career spanning over five decades. Among his many credits is the Award winning "Red Tails," the motion picture that portrayed the incredible exploits of the Tuskegee Airmen, the famed African American pilots of World War II. He also executive produced "John Lewis: Get in the Way," the ground-breaking documentary about the life and career of Congressman John Lewis.

An outstanding alumnus of both the Stony Brook College Preparatory School and Howard University, Charles began his career as a producer on the iconic 1970's television series, "The Rockford Files." Following his Emmy award winning work on that program, he also produced such long-running shows as "Magnum, P.I.," "Quantum Leap," "JAG," and "NCIS," on which he has been one of the Executive Producers for 22 seasons. His many other credits include producing such notable programs as "Simon and Simon," "Bret Maverick," "Hellinger's Law," "Revealing Evidence," "B.L. Stryker," "First Monday," and "Voices of Our People," which garnered him two more Emmy Awards as both a producer and a performer. His extensive career encompasses over 1,000 hours of television programming.

Denise Nicholas

Nicholas' first novel, *FRESHWATER ROAD*, was voted a Best Book of 2005 by The Washington Post, The Chicago Tribune, The Atlanta Journal Constitution, The Detroit Free Press and Newsday. The novel was included in the October 2005 Book Sense Picks List, was awarded the 2005 First Novelist Award from the American Library Association's Black Caucus, received a starred review from Publishers Weekly and Booklist. The Washington Post featured the novel on the front page of its Book World.

Before becoming a full-time writer, actress Nicholas starred in three television series: "Room 222," "Baby, I'm Back," and "In the Heat of the Night," the last opposite the late Carroll O'Connor. She wrote six episodes for "Heat," all of which were produced for air. She also starred with Sidney Poitier and Bill Cosby in three films: "Let's Do It Again," "A Piece of the Action," and "Ghost Dad." Nicholas received three Golden Globe Award nominations for "Room 222;" and was honored with a Best Actress NAACP Image Award for the film, "Let's Do It Again."

Denise Nicholas began her career with the Free Southern Theater in Mississippi and Louisiana during the Civil Rights Movement. She also was an original member of the Negro Ensemble Company in New York. Denise is a graduate of the University of Southern California and also attended the University of Michigan. She lives in Los Angeles.

Visit denisenicholas.net for additional information on Denise Nicholas.

Otto E. Stallworth, Jr., MD

After 45 years of medical practice as an anesthesiologist in Los Angeles, Dr. Stallworth pursued his passion for writing beginning late in 2015, after being accepted into the Master of Fine Arts program at UCLA.

In 2018, Denise Nicholas, award-winning actress and author of the acclaimed book *FRESHWATER ROAD*, invited the doctor to join her Longwood Writers Workshop, where he conceived his memoir, *Are You a N****r or a Doctor?*, and delivered it in February 2023.

Sunsets by Otto, Jr. (a book of sunset photographs) hit the shelves in December 2023. Towards the end of 2025, he plans to publish a murder mystery novel titled *Murder at BeautyWorld*.

In early 2022, Dr. Stallworth began a non-profit foundation, the Stallworth OhYes! Foundation, which awarded four-year full scholarships to students at Howard University in Washington, D.C., and Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee, his alma maters. His goal is to award many more scholarships from donations to the Stallworth OhYes! Foundation.

Please visit www.ottoestallworthjrmd.com for more information on Otto E. Stallworth, Jr., MD. "Be a Rainbow in a Needy Student's Cloud! www.stallworthohyes.foundation"

GW Williams

GW Williams is journeying from the stricture of writing for business to learning to master the creative world of story. Along the road she's written poetry and prose and developed messaging in the form of narrative columns in quarterly corporate communications. She was born in Santa Monica, California and grew up in the diverse neighborhoods of Venice and Santa Monica. Her life adventures to date encompass an education from the Cal State system and USC, raising a son, and managing a career that included executive positions in contracts and project management in both the private and public sectors in the US and abroad. She has traveled extensively and gathers her memories to develop some of her fictional stories. Two stories in *A Gathering of Voices* were inspired by the year she spent working in Tripoli, Libya for a Fortune 500 engineering firm. Since her teens she's loved to write. One of her recent works was published in the Tiny Love Stories section of the New York Times. She's currently working on short stories and essays to submit to literary magazines and a multi-narrator novel inspired by memoir and completely agrees with award-winning poet Gwendolyn Brooks that "Writing is delicious agony."

Hattie Winston

Hattie Winston, acclaimed actor, singer, producer, Broadway veteran and lover of learning, continues to entertain audiences on film, television and stage in a career that has spanned more than five decades. Although her love of performing began in her hometown of Greenville, Mississippi, where she was encouraged by family members, nuns and her community, this love has nourished and supported her art all over the world.

Ms. Winston's first professional show was *The Prodigal Son*, written by Langston Hughes and directed by Vinette Carroll, at the Greenwich Mews Theatre in New York City. It was on the stage of The Greenwich Mews Theatre that Winston 'play-acted' alone when she first arrived in New York. Ironical that her first professional job would be on that very stage! Ms. Winston has shared her talents with audiences of the world-renowned Negro Ensemble Company, also in New York City, where she was one of its founding actors. The years spent at NEC afforded her the opportunity to portray numerous characters in innumerable plays, including *The Great MacDaddy* by Paul Carter Harrison, *Home* by Samm-Art Williams, and *Song of the Lusitanian Bogey* by Peter Weiss. From 'play-acting' to NEC to Broadway soon followed: *Hair*, *The Me Nobody Knows*, *I Love My Wife*, *Scapino*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *The Tap Dance Kid*. In addition, Ms. Winston has Image Award nominations, Audelco Awards, Obie Awards as Best Actress in both *Mother Courage* and *The Michigan*, while garnering Drama-Logue awards for her roles in *To Take Arms* and *Up The Mountain*.

Although best known for co-starring with Ted Danson for six years as Margaret on the hit CBS series "Becker," Winston has enjoyed many years of television success with commercials and voice-overs, including, but not limited to "The Electric Company," "Homefront," "Castle," "ER," "Nurse," "The Game," "Reed Between the Lines," "Cold Case," "Numb3rs," "Girlfriends," and "Mike and Molly." She also recurred on the Cedric the Entertainer and Niecy Nash's series "The Soul Man."

Ms. Winston is a proud member of Smart Set, Inc., Co-Chair along with Danny Glover of The Los Angeles Women's Theatre Festival, Board member of the Los Angeles Center Theater Group (which includes the

Ahmanson Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, and Kirk Douglas Theatre), CCAP (Classic and Contemporary American Plays), and other charitable organizations. With her many accolades, her proudest accomplishment is that of wife of noted musician, Harold Wheeler and mother of Samantha Wheeler.

For more information about *A GATHERING OF VOICES* visit:

LongwoodWritersWorkshop.com

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