



# 2021 Annual Report

## Table of Contents

Message from the President .....	1
Board of Directors.....	2
Programs and Activities .....	3
Financial Statement.....	4
Our Members in the Community.....	5
Our Members in Print.....	6
Contact Us.....	6



***Our Mission: To provide a safe, open, and supportive environment for writers to share their work and receive constructive feedback and encouragement.***

## Special Thanks...

Special thanks to the friends and organizations that help support Journey Writers, Inc.

The Center for Leadership and Justice  
Priya Morgenstern, Esq., ProBono Partnership  
Gabriel M. Lopez, Esq., Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP  
Daniel R. Cooper Esq., Cooper & Kurz  
Mark A. Brevard, New England Donor Services  
Journey Writers' Friends and Families

## Message from the President

There is a saying, “May you live in interesting times.” It’s supposed to be a curse. Perhaps it is. The past year has been interesting. There were global and national issues. We faced individual challenges. And as an organization, we learned to do things differently, at a distance, while still trying to maintain the closeness and support we had come to take for granted when we were able to meet face-to-face. Like most others, Journey Writers came to rely on Zoom to provide the meeting place to listen to each other’s stories, exchange ideas and offer support and encouragement.

I’m proud to say Journey Writers never missed a workshop. We worked together, learning the ins and outs of logging into meetings, muting and unmuting and how to hold a cohesive conversation while we all sat in separate locations. However, for all the challenges distancing presented, in some ways these interesting times brought us closer together. We visited members’ homes (virtually). We met their families and sometimes, their pets. Out-of-state members were able to see the faces of old friends. Members were able to join meetings from wherever they were, including their decks, their living rooms and even, at times, from parked cars.

We launched our website late in 2019 and just a couple of months into the pandemic, we felt confident enough to step out onto a virtual platform and offer “Rona’s Chicken and Waffles,” a live-stream program of our writing. Since then, we’ve done other virtual programs – things we might not have tried, had we continued to meet in person.

We look forward to the time when we will again be able to sit at a common table. In the meantime, we’ll continue to meet and work virtually. We invite you to check our website, [journeywriters.org](http://journeywriters.org), read our writing, join a workshop, and find out what we’ll be up to next!

*Carla Dean*

President, Journey Writers, Inc.

## Board of Directors



Denise Best  
Director



Carla Dean  
President



Regina Dyton  
Director



Thelza Ellington  
Director



Liston Filyaw  
Vice President



Beth Gibbs  
Director



Andre Keitt  
Artistic Director



Lashawn Middleton  
Secretary



Larry Roeming  
Treasurer

# Programs & Activities

## Bi-Weekly Writers Workshops

Twice each month, Journey Writers holds a three-hour Writers Workshop. Members are encouraged to share their work with the group and receive feedback, suggestions, and encouragement.

In addition to reading their own works, members are encouraged to stretch their creativity by writing on a prompt that is provided just prior to each meeting. Prompt topics are varied, and writers' responses are equally diverse and have included short stories, plays, essays, poetry and songs.

## Journey Writers Tell the Whole Story

Our annual February production of "Journey Writers Tell the Whole Story: Queer Black History" has become a community favorite. Each year, we select several icons from black history and present them as their "whole selves." Featured individuals have included Bayard Rustin, Moms Mabley, Lorraine Hansberry, Marsha P. Johnson, and Johnny Mathis, among others.

In March 2019, we presented a "Queer Black History" workshop for the True Colors Annual Conference. Then, the following year, we offered the Conference a pre-recorded panel of writers who discussed LGBTQ issues as they related to these and other individuals. We are becoming quite adept at using Zoom, YouTube and Facebook live to reach out to our community.

## Family: It's More Than You Think

Our 2019 presentation of "Family: It's More than You Think," offered a look at the diversity of families. Members presented dramatic readings that examined family structures and dynamics, looked back at childhoods, and considered the uncertainties of old age.

## Rona's Chicken and Waffles

For the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic was on the minds of all our members. In looking for a way to reach out to our audience and contribute to their entertainment, we decided to present a selection of writings from one of our prompts.

When Workshops were held in person, members brought refreshments to share with the group. At each meeting, we found that someone (often more than one person) had brought chicken. We began to wonder what would happen if there were no more chicken. So, we asked members to write on, "What happens when the chicken runs out?"

In May 2020, we presented a live program, "Rona's Chicken and Waffles," a compilation of our chicken prompt stories and poems along with a few other entertaining pieces. The event marked our first foray into virtual performances and was a great success.

## 2020 Financial Statement

Income	Director Contributions	\$500.00
	Donations	205.00
	Income from Events and Performances	840.88
	Membership Dues	<u>610.00</u>
	TOTAL INCOME	\$2155.88
Expenses	Government Fees	\$ 80.00
	Business Expenses	329.11
	Purchase of Merchandise	99.80
	Gifts	<u>174.30</u>
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$683.21
	INCOME OVER EXPENSES	\$1472.67

## Our Members in the Community

2-21-19: Journey Writers hosted a display in Urban League Black History Legacy Exhibition. (Hartford, CT)

5/18/19: Leslie Bivans, Jacque Davis and Liston Filyaw were featured in "Day of Tears." (Middletown, CT)

5/22/19: Liston Filyaw and Carla Dean, were facilitators for "Kids Speak" at UConn School of Law. (Hartford, CT)

6/3/19: Regina Dyton performed her original work, "Trent Street" for the Pride Community Arts Exhibit & Art Series.

6/20/19: Regina Dyton's original work, "One Hot Night," was presented at Real Art Ways. (Hartford, CT)

7/11/19: Regina Dyton facilitated at "Awakened Retreat." (Jamaica)

7/21-28/19: Members attended Nancy Aronie's Chilmark Writing Workshop. (Martha's Vineyard, MA)

7/28-8/3/19: Jacque Davis and Liston Filyaw performed in play readings at the National Black Theater Festival. (Winston-Salem, NC)

10/12/19: Leslie Bivans, Jacque Davis, and Liston Filyaw performed in "Day of Tears." (Amherst, MA)

10/18/19: Mel Thomas' original play, "Kathy's Secret," was performed at the Carriage House Theater. (Hartford, CT)

2/16/20: Regina Dyton and Andre Keitt were interviewed about "Journey Writers Tell the Whole Story: Queer Black History," on WFSB TV Channel 3. (Hartford, CT)

9/26/20: Leslie Bivans, Jacque Davis, Liston Filyaw, and Theresa Harris performed their original works for "Say Our Names." (online/virtual)

12/27/20: Theresa Harris received an Ollie Award from WIN TV. (Windsor, CT)

## Our Members in Print

Melissa Marshall:

"I Can't Swim but I Haven't Drowned Yet: Notes from a Disability Rights Activist," PYP Academy Press, May 23, 2020

Paperback and Kindle: Amazon and Barnes & Noble

Beth Gibbs:

"Enlighten Up! Finding Clarity Contentment and Resilience in a Complicated World," Emerald Lake Books, January 3, 2021

Paperback and eBook: Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and from Beth's website: [bethgibbs.com](http://bethgibbs.com)

"How We Can Leverage the Power of Gratitude for to Improve Our Overall Well-being," Arianna Huffington's Authority Magazine, April 1, 2021

Link: <https://medium.com/authority-magazine/beth-gibbs-of-proyoga-therapeutics-how-we-can-leverage-the-power-of-gratitude-to-improve-our-b1cb9c369cfc>

Mel Thomas:

"Someone Else's Happiness," published in "Next Avenue," [nextavenue.org](http://nextavenue.org), November 19, 2020

## Contact Us

Journey Writers, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. We provide a safe, open and supportive environment for writers to share their work, receive constructive feedback and encouragement. Workshops are held twice each month. New writers are always invited to attend. We welcome your inquiries and your support. Please contact us if you would like to volunteer, become a member, attend a workshop, join our mailing list or make a contribution.

Email: [journeywriters@journeywriters.org](mailto:journeywriters@journeywriters.org)

Website: [journeywriters.org](http://journeywriters.org)

47 Vine Street

Hartford, CT 06112



