

# SOMETHING SHE SAID: THE Barbara Jordan Story

## By: Dr. Tyrone D. Dixon

We are excited about a feature documentary about Barbara Jordan's life- not just her accomplishments - but how she lived. Who was Barbara before the world knew her as the first Black woman to be elected to congress? Barbara was a Maverick, not just as a politician but as a human being. The social and political relevance of Barbara Jordan is more apparent today than the day she was sworn in.

Today a record number of women thrive in Congress and the Senate. Barbara's steadfastness and passion for change has formed a legacy that continues to nurture and is preserved in every person that thrives in the face of challenges from societal ills that plague every generation.

Barbara's voice was unique and authentic. Her cadence and precision of word usage created a poetic delivery unique to her every time she spoke. That's how most of us know and remember Barbara Jordan.

This feature documentary will allow Barbara to tell her story from her point of view, with her own words. There are a few people, those who knew her best, who will be included to validate or substantiate her story. Music will play a huge role in developing pace and tone of the film. This documentary will use a combination of documentary styles such as poetic, expository, and performative to develop a narrative structure unique to Barbara Jordan's amazing story.

Critically acclaimed documentaries such as Tupac Resurrection (nominated for an academy award) and I'm Not Your Negro (nominated for an academy award and winner of an Emmy) are examples of feature documentaries that allows the audience to experience the voice of the subject with cinematic tone and prowess. As well, The CNN produced documentary RGB (the Ruth Bader Ginsberg Story) was also nominated for an academy and won an Emmy and demonstrated the contemporary flare and authenticity that will be applied to the Barbara Jordan story.

Act 1) Barbara Jordan was introduced to the world when she won. Setting the stage for Barbara to become imbedded within the bowels of history. Winning her seat is the inciting incident. Barbara will share her thoughts of that moment and moments leading up to the win. Who were the players? You don't get where she got alone. Houston, 5th Ward, Texas Southern University, Boston University set the backdrop giving way to explore the period factually and authentically.

Act 2) Barbara's life, like all humans, was challenged with unforeseen turning points. Health and social and political challenges created conflict that were unique to her. Many people knew of Barbara and her being the first African American congresswoman. What they probably don't know, but would love to know, is how Barbara's faith and dedication lead her to victory despite racial, gender and social inequalities.

Act 3) Barbara met her challenges with Grace and Dignity. This story will allow Barbara (with the help of a special few) to explain how she resolved the greatest of her challenges. When it came to her health, she battled and lived the best life that she could. Even in the face of death Barbara's commitment to her community and the people at large never waned.

We proposed to create a treatment, look-book and proof of concept, reflective of Barbara's time line. Not just images of her but also images reflecting the period (social-political). What did it look like when she was growing up in 5th Ward? Who were mentors/ idols / who inspired her? What inspired her to make the moves she made in life/ in politics?

The development grant allows our development team to produce a proof of concept, a look book that reflects the vision and purpose of the treatment outline that drives the story of Barbara Jordan, a full production team, budget and schedule for production and distribution. The production of this documentary will be facilitated through the School of Communication and qualified students. Texas Southern University is the home for the Barbara Jordan archives which gives the development/production team a huge advantage with research, photo images, videos, news clips, cassette recordings, text, articles. The archives in conjunction with present interviews of people who knew her best as well as those that she inspired from afar. Their stories will help validate Barbara's telling of her story.

This feature documentary will be distributed through markets such as Sundance film festival, Toronto Film Festival, AFI fest, Theatrical release, Netflix, HBO and other streaming opportunities. In addition our goal is to work with consultants like Ebony Magazine that will assist with research marketing and distribution of the Barbara Jordan feature documentary.