

## Metro Detroit author releases book about his World War I veteran father

"A Place Near the Front" shares the coming-of-age story inspired by author's undocumented immigrant father

Detroit-area author William G. Herbert writes about the immigrant experience in America through the eyes of his father Gordon in his first book, "A Place Near the Front."



William G. Herbert

His father, born on the island of Trinidad in 1897 came to the U.S. in 1915 as a teenaged merchant seaman. Facing discrimination as both a black man and an immigrant, the senior Herbert's coming-of-age-story recounts his experiences as an undocumented newcomer to the U.S. and his service in World War I. Herbert will read from his book on Tuesday, May 2, 6 p.m. at Pages Bookstore, 19560 Grand River Ave., Detroit.

"A Place Near the Front" tells how Gordon grew up in Trinidad dreaming of bigger things, and takes a job as a merchant seaman aboard the SS Mariposa in January 1915. After several trips to New York City, Gordon jumps ship and slips into the streets of Harlem. He works his way through Howard University and ultimately makes his way to the trenches of World War I, serving as a second lieutenant with the Buffalo Soldiers, earning his citizenship along the way. Whether it's dealing with the mob that's chasing him through the dangerous streets of New York's Hell's Kitchen, battling German soldiers, or facing his most insidious enemy - his own military commanders who resent black officers - Gordon never stops reaching for his dreams.



"Writing this book about my dad has been a labor of love," said Herbert. "My dad passed away when I was 18, but he shared with me and my siblings many stories of his life as an immigrant in the U.S., initially as an undocumented immigrant. Unfortunately, he died before he could tell me all the details of his life so I filled in the remaining pieces based on my memories of him. This book is a testament to his commitment, sacrifices and the love he had for the U.S."

"A Place Near the Front" (ISBN: 978-1-4917-8717-5) is available at all online booksellers and at [www.williamgherbert.com](http://www.williamgherbert.com), where visitors can get information on the book and the author and watch a short video about the book.

### Author Bio

A Detroit-area resident, William G. Herbert has had a long career in computer science and engineering and served as a paratrooper in the U.S. Army. Born in Harlem to a West Indian father and an African-American mother, Herbert credits his upbringing, time served in the military and his longtime membership in Alpha Phi Alpha, the nation's oldest black fraternity (he sits on the executive board of the Detroit alumni chapter) for making him the person he is today. Herbert is married with three daughters, five grandchildren and one great-grandchild. "A Place Near the Front" is his first novel.