

# PORTRAYAL & PERCEPTION

## AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN & BOYS

Episode 11

### Fine Arts and Artists

**With a paintbrush, dance shoe, or pen, the men featured in this episode use a variety of tools for self-expression.**



A classical musician advances his skill level with the French horn as a symphony fellow, a painter empowers young people through visual art, a playwright challenges racial stereotypes through his theater festivals, a ballet dancer breaks down barriers in a traditional environment, a poet uses his prose to inspire his college students, and an arts educator who founded Pittsburgh CAPA (Creative and Performing Arts) High School, all have turned their artistic passions, into **vibrant careers in the fine arts**. Each artist faced obstacles and celebrated accomplishments on his journey into his chosen career.

#### FOR TEACHERS

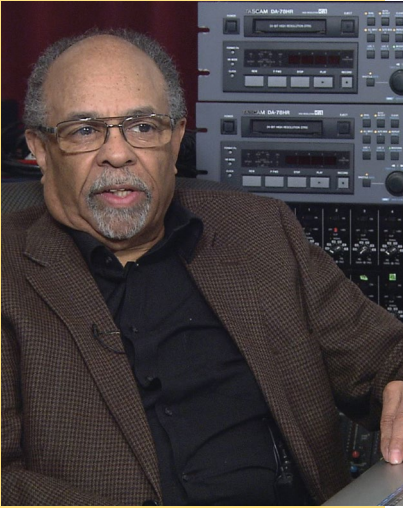
**These guides are intended for use in sociology, information technology, media literacy, and social studies classes. Questions are geared for high school students, grades 9-12.**

#### ABOUT THIS GUIDE

*Portrayal & Perception: African American Men & Boys* is a series of community-based television programs produced by WQED Multimedia showcasing positive media profiles of successful African American men. Sponsored by The Heinz Endowments, this series strives to inspire discussion, elevate portrayal, and clarify perceptions of African American men and boys in the community. This guide provides further information, discussion questions, and resources for students or groups to explore the topics highlighted in each episode.

*Artists are the folks who have an opportunity to speak for people who may not have a voice or may not know how to utilize that voice. - Darrell Kinsel*

# Biography



## Dr. Harry Clark

**Neighborhood:** Squirrel Hill

**Occupation:** Founding Principal of Pittsburgh CAPA High School (Retired)

### **What are some examples of new projects you are working on?**

Coordinating “Honoring Our Elders” by the African American Jazz Preservation Society of Pittsburgh, a celebration of the surviving African American musicians of Pittsburgh’s segregated Black Local #471 Musicians Union (1908-1965); developing collaborations between Lighthouse Arts, Inc., and several performing, professional musicians who teach in school districts as far reaching as West Virginia; and working on a strategic plan as a board member of Kente Arts Alliance.

**Birthday (month & day):** May 27, 1940. I included the year, as it is quite significant to my years of first-hand experience from then to now as a Negro, a Colored, an Afro-American, an African American, and a Black. Most importantly, as a human being.

### **Who was your greatest mentor and how did he affect your life?**

I question the idea that I had only one mentor and that my mentor was male. My greatest mentors were my mom and dad. My mother nurtured my gentle, congenial side, and provided me with the incentive to be strong in a gentle way, to work hard, to be as informed as possible, to question, and to be respectful. My father had limited schooling; he dropped out at 8th grade to help support his parents and siblings. Unlike my mother, my father experienced racism, segregation, and racial terrorism because of skin color. His family moved from the south to Pittsburgh. *His weapon was education.* He preached that we could only compete if we were three times better prepared than our white counterparts. He believed that your work in life must be your very best. Your work is your signature. My siblings and I had good educations. It paid off because my third most important mentor was my high school band director, Mr. James Vincent Caruso, a white male who recognized my hard work, my talent, and my signature. He initiated in me the desire to become a teacher. He was the reason I pursued music - it was because of his guidance, support and belief in me. My mom. My dad. My band director.

### **What are the greatest challenges and opportunities you think African American men face in the world today?**

The greatest challenges most young African American males face is the feeling of hopelessness, lack of self-worth, and that they are victims of their environment. This applies most to those who are struggling at a poverty-level existence, surrounded by crime, joblessness, poor nutrition, substandard schools, biased law enforcement, and a social system designed to channel them from school to jail. This is the worst case scenario, but an astonishingly increasing fact.

### **What are the opportunities for the African American male?**

Which African American male? I was given the middle name of “Delano” (Franklin Delano Roosevelt) at birth by my grandmother, who dreamed that I could grow up to be president; those are the hopes, dreams, love, support, and guidance that against all odds, every African American male must have. While it took 68 years after my birth for someone who looked like me to finally become president, it did happen.

*For young people, the arts are so important because it's a way of self-expression. The ability to be able to reach inside and be able to say something with your body, with your voice, with your hands.*  
– Dr. Harry Clark

# Discussion Questions

*You have to see someone that looks like you in order for you to know that you can accomplish it.*  
—Darrell Kinsel

## CREATE YOUR OWN MEDIA!

Teachers, help your students create their own media. Download the [Media Guide](#) and [Common Resources](#).

1. What art form featured in this episode - dance, theatre, poetry, visual art, music - speaks to you the most and why? What can you express through this art that you can't otherwise?
2. Why did Terrance feel the need to hide his poetry? What is your private passion, and what prevents you from sharing it with others?
3. What do you think the Black and White Theatre Festival at Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company accomplishes for racial relationships?
4. Research and report on an artist who inspires you, as Darrell describes doing with August Wilson and Jean-Michel Basquiat.
5. Does anyone in your life use the arts to express his or her creativity? What is his or her art form of choice and how does it express his or her feelings and desires?
6. Darrell found his artistic inspiration from the Carnegie Museum of Art's Carnegie International. What events in your past has inspired you to pursue a particular interest?

## FEATURED ORGANIZATIONS

**Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre:** [www.pbt.org](http://www.pbt.org)

**Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra:**  
[www.pittsburghsymphony.org](http://www.pittsburghsymphony.org)

**Terrance Hayes:** [www.terrancehayes.com](http://www.terrancehayes.com)

**Pittsburgh Playwrights Theatre Company:**  
[www.pghplaywrights.com](http://www.pghplaywrights.com)

**MGR:** [www.mgrf.org](http://www.mgrf.org)

**Lighthouse Arts, Inc.:**  
[www.lighthouseartsmusic.org](http://www.lighthouseartsmusic.org)



# Resources

**Famous Black Artists:** Biographies of famous African American visual artists from Biography.com  
[www.biography.com/people/groups/black-artists#awesm=~oGODyIf4e7nMcY](http://www.biography.com/people/groups/black-artists#awesm=~oGODyIf4e7nMcY)

**Masters and Master Works - On Black Male Poetics:** Essay on Black male poets by Afaa Michael Weaver — [www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/masters-and-master-works-black-male-poetics](http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/masters-and-master-works-black-male-poetics)

**African American Poets:** Listing of 52 African American Poets with biographies, poems, and quotations for each — [www.poetrysoup.com/famous\\_poets/african\\_american.aspx](http://www.poetrysoup.com/famous_poets/african_american.aspx)

**African American Theatre Companies:** Extensive list of links of African American theater companies from across the country — [www.jacneed.com/African\\_American\\_Theatre.html](http://www.jacneed.com/African_American_Theatre.html)

**Black Theatre Network:** Association of a diverse group of artists, educators, scholars, students, and theatre lovers who are dedicated to the exploration and preservation of the theatrical visions of African American Theatre — [www.blacktheatrenetwork.org](http://www.blacktheatrenetwork.org)

**Blacks in Classical Music:** Historical listing of Black composers, musicians, opera performers, ballet dancers, concert singers/instrumentalists, and conductors with links to biographies, YouTube videos, and further resources — [www.blackpast.org/blacks-classical-music](http://www.blackpast.org/blacks-classical-music)

**AfriClassical:** Website resource and accompanying blog featuring biographies, recordings, and performance listings of African Americans in classical music  
[www.chevalierdesaintgeorges.homestead.com/index.html](http://www.chevalierdesaintgeorges.homestead.com/index.html)

**International Association of Blacks in Dance:** Association of African American dance professionals — [www.iabdassociation.org](http://www.iabdassociation.org)

**The Best in Black Dance:** Slideshow compiled by *The Root* magazine of twelve of the best Black dance companies in the United States  
[www.theroot.com/photos/2010/06/a\\_look\\_at\\_the\\_best\\_black\\_dance\\_companies\\_in\\_the\\_us.html](http://www.theroot.com/photos/2010/06/a_look_at_the_best_black_dance_companies_in_the_us.html)

**Kyle Abraham:** Website featuring the Pittsburgh native and MacArthur Foundation award-winning choreographer's newest project, *Pavement* — [www.abrahaminmotion.org](http://www.abrahaminmotion.org)

## MEDIA

**The Ground on Which I Stand:** New documentary of playwright August Wilson and his celebrated 10 play pittsburgh cycle — [www.wqed.org/augustwilson](http://www.wqed.org/augustwilson)

**Bill T. Jones - A Good Man:** *American Masters* documentary on award-winning choreographer Bill T. Jones, chronicling the process for the creation of *Fondly Do We Hope... Fervently Do We Pray*  
[www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/episodes/bill-t-jones-a-good-man/watch-the-full-documentary/1917](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/episodes/bill-t-jones-a-good-man/watch-the-full-documentary/1917)



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