



[You Can Fly: The Tuskegee Airmen](#)

By Carole Boston Weatherford

Illustrated by Jeffery Boston Weatherford

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Interviews: Carole Weatherford (cbwpoet@gmail.com)

Jeffery Weatherford (jefferytheartist@gmail.com)

Review Copies: Reka Simonsen (reka.simonsen@simonandschuster.com)

Photos to download: <http://cbweatherford.com/books/youcanfly/>

When artist Jeffery Weatherford was a kindergartener, his teacher prodded him to finish coloring. When he was a third grader, his mother, Carole Boston Weatherford, begged him to stop doodling and to start listening in class. But when she realized that his drawings of planes, weapons and action figures were good, she put him in studio art classes.

Now, mother, an award-winning children's book author, and son, a debut illustrator, have collaborated on a new book, *You Can Fly: The Tuskegee Airmen*. Marking the 75th anniversary of the so-called Tuskegee Experiment, the book salutes the U.S. military's first African-American pilots. Their training, trials and triumphs are documented through poignant poems and striking scratchboard illustrations.

A native of High Point, N.C., Mr. Weatherford majored in art and design at Winston-Salem State University. He is completing a Master's degree in studio art at Howard University in Washington, D.C. The artist used archival photographs as reference for the illustrations. And he drew on his years as a gamer to render battle scenes. Art from the book has already shown at galleries.

Ms. Weatherford, a Fayetteville State University English professor, says that newsreels, superhero comics and her father's wartime snapshots inspired the text. She chose a second person narrator so that readers could sit in the cockpit, face racial barriers and meet historical figures such as First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, boxer Joe Louis and entertainer Lena Horne.

Long before conceiving *You Can Fly*, mother and son toured the Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site in Alabama and World War II exhibits at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.

"Creating a new book is like birthing a child," says Ms. Weatherford. "I take special pride *in You Can Fly* because Jeffery and I brought it to life together."

Ms. Weatherford's 40-plus books have won NAACP Image Awards, Caldecott Honors, the Coretta Scott King Award and other honors.

PHOTOS



Mother and son, c. 2000



Jeffery Weatherford



Tuskegee Airman



Three Planes