

Rodney Lawrence Hurst, Sr. is a father, a grandfather, a great grandfather, a widower, a cancer survivor, a civil rights activist, a Black historian, a United States Air Force veteran, and the author of three award-winning books--*It was never about a hot dog and a Coke®!* A personal account of the 1960 sit-in demonstrations in Jacksonville, Florida, and *Ax Handle Saturday, Unless WE Tell It...It Never Gets Told!* and *Never Forget Who You Are: Conversations about Racism and Identity Development*, which he co-authored with Dr. Rudy F. Jamison Jr., was published in August 2020.

Hurst, a native of Jacksonville and a 1960 high school graduate of segregated Northwestern Junior-Senior High School in Jacksonville, was the sixteen-year-old President of the Jacksonville Youth Council NAACP and was one of the leaders of the 1960 sit-in demonstrations. His book, *It was never about a hot dog and a Coke®!* recounts with clarity the segregated civic, the segregated political, and the segregated educational climate of Jacksonville Florida in the 1950's and the 1960's, and the 1960 Jacksonville sit-ins and Ax Handle Saturday. Due to the black-out of local news about these important civil rights events in Jacksonville, his firsthand account book is the only historically accurate description of those sit-ins and the violence of Ax Handle Saturday. *It was never about a hot dog and a Coke®!* is the winner of more than a dozen awards, including the 2008 USA National Best Books Awards national book competition First Place Gold Medal Award for Multicultural Nonfiction.

His second book *Unless WE Tell It...It Never Gets Told!* published in January 2016 relates stories of notable Blacks of Jacksonville who impacted this city and the country, relates stories of Jacksonville Civil Rights History, and relates stories of the historical fight against Racism. It was recently honored as one of five finalists for the 2016 Multicultural Non-Fiction Award by the National Best Books Awards national book competition and was honored with the 2017 City of Jacksonville's Historical Preservation Commission Award. The documentary, *Ax Handle Saturday: 50 Years Later*, is based on his book. Hurst's leadership as a teenager during the Civil Rights Movement is also the subject of a chapter in the Scholastic book, *Ten True Tales: Young Civil Rights Heroes* written for Third Graders to Seventh Graders and ages 8 to 12.

His most recent book, *Never Forget Who You Are: Conversations about Racism and Identity Development*, which he co-authored with Dr. Rudy F. Jamison Jr. discusses Racism and identity development through Mr. Hurst's eyes and his co-author, Dr. Rudy Jamison's eyes.

In addition to his involvement in the Civil Rights Movement, Hurst served two four-year terms on the Jacksonville City Council, and is responsible for a number of "firsts" in the Jacksonville Community: he

was one of the thirteen original national recipients of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting Television Fellowships; he was the first Black to co-host a television talk show in Jacksonville on PBS Channel WJCT; he was the first Black male hired at the Prudential South Central Home Office in Jacksonville, Florida; and he was the first Black to serve as the Executive Director of the State of Florida's Construction Industry Licensing Board. A Silver Life Member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Hurst is involved with several Boards and Agencies in the Jacksonville Community. He is a veteran of the United States Air Force.

Hurst speaks extensively on Civil Rights, Black History, and Racism. He served on the Jacksonville Civil Rights Task Force and chaired the Sub-Committee on the Civil Rights timeline for Jacksonville, which was codified by the Jacksonville City Council. Hurst speaks extensively on Civil Rights, Black History, and Racism. He was the featured speaker at the City of Jacksonville's 23rd Annual Martin Luther King Breakfast, the featured speaker at the Nassau County Annual Martin Luther King Breakfast, the featured speaker for the Brevard County NAACP Branch Freedom Fund Dinner, and the featured speaker at Deltona's Black History luncheon. Hurst was also the keynote speaker at the Induction Ceremony of the Harriette and Harry T. Moore into the Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame, among many other engagements.

Hurst nominated both his mentor and civil rights icon Rutledge H. Pearson, and his longtime friend, and civil rights icon Dr. Arnett Girardeau to the Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame. Pearson was inducted posthumously in 2016, and Dr. Girardeau was inducted in 2017. Girardeau passed 4 months after his induction.

Hurst serves as an adviser to the Center for Urban Education and Policy at the University of North Florida. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune Visionary Award given by the National Alumni Association of Bethune-Cookman University, the Outstanding Alumnus Award by the National Alumni Association of Edward Waters College, the President's Award by the President of the Jacksonville Branch National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the Jacksonville, Florida OneJax Silver Medallion Humanitarian Award.

Hurst and his late wife Ann (June 24, 1945-September 5, 2016) would have celebrated their Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary on December 10, 2016. Hurst has two sons, Rodney II (Vandlyn), and Todd. Rodney II is the father of two daughters, Marquette (Mar-Kita) and Jasmine. Hurst's eldest granddaughter Marquette, and her husband Kyle are the recent parents of Everly Ann, his first great-grand. His youngest granddaughter Jasmine is a graduate of the Alvin Ailey Dance School in New York,

where she lives. He worships at First Baptist Church of Oakland, in Jacksonville, and The Bethel Church, also in Jacksonville.