

The Giant Lie!, by Bret Williams

From a young age, I became aware that the world was filled with “haves” and “have nots,” but that these categories did not match innate abilities. Instead, there was vast machinery designed to convince everyone that their station in life was deserved and the result of their ability, or lack thereof. I came to understand viscerally that this was a GIANT LIE. Rather, anybody could be anything, whether they were born male or female, black or white, straight or gay, rich or poor. It was the LIE that told people who they were and what they were destined to be. I rejected the LIE!

I was the ninth child of nine children born to my mother and a father listed as “unknown.” Although I was unaware until my adolescent years, we lived in poverty, existing on public assistance to survive. I recall food stamps, “due bills,” and free cheese, among other life-sustaining indignities. But throughout my childhood, I knew that my life was mine to lead, make or break. So, despite under-funded schools, poverty, and the daily dangers and injustices of life in my neighborhood, when I had good teachers, I took advantage of the chance to learn; when I had bad teachers, I tried to learn anyway.

Before my 10th year of school, to get a better education, I went to the Board of Education with a classmate and transferred myself from Manassas to Central High, signing my mother's name. And upon graduation, I left “Scutterfield” in North Memphis and went on to Harvard and Stanford Law School. Later, I was a lawyer at the U.S. Attorney's Offices in New York and Atlanta, the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of General Counsel. And, intentionally, I have chosen careers to help make the world a better place – for victims of crime, for people's right to vote, and for the environment in which we live.

The GIANT LIE has no place in Atlanta. We live in a special city that is rich with promise and opportunity for all its residents. Join me in making a change so that everyone and anyone, my kids and yours, can go wherever their talents and desires take them. There is room at the table for everyone. We all want the same thing – safe neighborhoods, schools that give your kids a chance, housing you can afford, and a reliable way to work!

A king, who hailed from Atlanta, once said, “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” The deep meaning of this statement was self-evident then and demands immediate action now that extends beyond color. Join me in rejecting the GIANT LIE! Let's make that day arrive here in Atlanta for all its residents, starting on November 7, 2017 – Election Day!