



Storytelling Arts of Indiana
Transforming everyday life

Teacher's Guide: About the Tellers

Table of Contents

[Click a name to navigate to that storyteller](#)

Deborah Asante.....	1
Donald Davis	2
Bill Harley.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Lou Ann Homan.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Jim May	4

Deborah Asante

Types of Stories:

- African and African American stories and folktales
- Family and personal stories

School Performance Schedule:

Performance Type	Day	Date	Starts	Ends	Appears With
Student (primary)	Friday	Feb. 17	10:00 am	11:15 am	Donald Davis
Student (primary)	Friday	Feb. 17	11:45am	1:00 pm	Donald Davis

Background:

One of Indiana's most captivating storytellers, Deborah Asante is from everywhere; her father's career was the Army. The eldest of five children, she began her storytelling career by coaxing her younger siblings to wash the dishes in exchange for a story from her. "I never knew what the story was going to be. I just made it up as I went along," she says.

Her natural talent with the spoken word led her to study acting in Los Angeles after attending college in southern California. When a friend in California moved back home to Indianapolis and founded the theater, Performance Plus, she offered Deborah a directing job there. Deborah took the job and found a home and a calling in Indy. Three years later, she founded a theater company of her own: Asante Children's Theatre (ACT) and became the artistic director, writing and producing plays on such themes as the Middle Passage, the Motown story, and African history. To cultivate her storytelling gift, Deborah applied for and was awarded a Creative Renewal Fellowship from the Arts Council of Indianapolis. The grant took her to Ghana, West Africa and where her research began with the African oral historians known as griots (gree-ohs). But Deborah's dramatic and engaging style is all her own. With warmth, energy and skill, she conveys the heart and soul of a story, weaving a rich tapestry of shared history.

- Deborah at [Young Audiences of Indiana](#)
- Read the *Indianapolis Star* article about Deborah, "[She Sees Blues as Key to Black History](#)"

Donald Davis

Types of Stories:

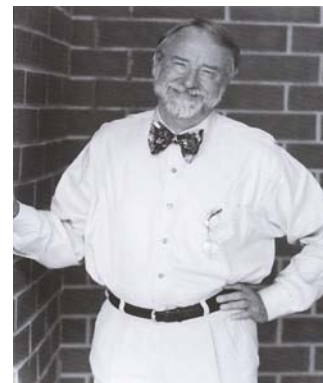
- Family and personal stories.
- Traditional Appalachian tales.

School Performance Schedule:

Performance Type	Day	Date	Starts	Ends	Appears With
Student (Primary)	Friday	Feb. 17	10:00 am	11:15 am	Deborah Asante
Student (Primary)	Friday	Feb. 17	11:45 am	1:00 pm	Deborah Asante
Family	Friday	Feb. 17	7:30 pm	8:30 pm	

Background:

Donald Davis grew up in the mountains of North Carolina during the 1950's and 1960's, roaming the hills of his grandparents' farm and listening to stories. "Storytelling" was unheard of then because stories were just a natural part of life—something people did while they snapped beans or fixed a fence. "I didn't learn stories," Donald says, "I just absorbed them." Fairy tales, simple and silly Jack tales, scary mountain lore, and nourishing true-to-life stories of his own neighbors and kin helped forge his own sense of self and later, a new profession. After earning a Masters in Divinity at Duke University, Donald became a Methodist pastor and delighted his congregations with humorous tales of his own childhood misadventures. This led to storytelling at festivals and after 20 years in the ministry, he became a professional teller full-time. A featured teller at the Smithsonian Institution and the World's Fair Donald has performed at festivals throughout the country and the world. He has been guest host of National Public Radio's, Good Evening, and has produced 23 recordings of his work and authored nine books, including the notable, *Writing as a Second Language*. Honored by his peers with the National Storytelling Network's Circle of Excellence Award, he is widely regarded as an American master of personal and family stories and master teacher of storytelling. His traditional and true-to-life stories leave listeners of all ages "limp with laughter" and "filled with the goodness of a true tale."



Web Sites:

Visit www.ddavisstoryteller.com

Selected Works:

- *Barking at a Fox-fur Coat*, Book
- *Big-Screen Drive In Theater*, CD
- *Braces*, CD

Bill Harley

Types of Stories:

- Childhood stories
- Humorous and musical tales

School Performance Schedule:

Performance Type	Day	Date	Starts	Ends
Family	Saturday	March 10	2 pm	3 pm

Background:



Dubbed a “Garrison Keillor for kids,” Bill Harley is one of the premier storytellers in the country, drawing huge crowds at national and regional festivals. Bill grew up in Indianapolis, where he was “the victim of a very normal childhood,” which spawned a wealth of hometown stories. Graduating college with a degree in religion, Bill went on to direct school programs in peaceful conflict resolution and has worked in schools as an Artist in Residence with the Rhode Island State Council for the Arts. Still active in community projects and education, he is a popular keynote speaker at regional and national conferences on education and children. Bill has also been a leader in the Pokanoket Watershed Alliance working to save the Runnins River and Hundred Acre Bay, close to his Massachusetts home. His art reflects such concerns. In his 2001 performance at The Children’s Museum with the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, Bill musically recounted the hilarious adventures of a single raindrop, illustrating the entire watershed cycle. He has won national awards for every one of his children’s recordings, including the 2006 Grammy for Best Spoken Word Album for Children, and he is a member of the National Storytelling Network’s Circle of Excellence. Bill has been a regular commentator on National Public Radio’s “All Things Considered,” since 1991. His listeners often find themselves blinking back tears one minute and aching from belly laughs the next. Bill is known for his ability to bring out the kid in all of us.

Web Sites:

For a chuckle visit www.billharley.com

Selected Works:

- *I Wanna Play*, CD
- *Blah Blah Blah*, CD
- *One More Time*, CD
- *The Amazing Flight of Darius Frobisher*, Book
- *Sitting Down to Eat*, Picture book

Lou Ann Homan

Types of Stories:

- World Folktales
- Family Stories

School Performance Schedule:

Performance Type	Day	Date	Starts	Ends	Appears With
Student (Primary)	Friday	October 14	10:00 a.m.	11:15 p.m.	Jim May
Student (Middle/High)	Friday	October 14	11:45 a.m.	1:00 p.m.	Jim May
Family	Friday	October 14	7:30 p.m.	8:30 p.m.	Jim May and others

Background:

Lou Ann Homan began telling stories as soon as she could get someone to listen to her—and as veteran teacher and the mother of three grown sons that was a long time ago! She has worked as a professional storyteller since receiving the Lilly Endowment Teacher Creativity Award for storytelling in 1988. Her stories have taken her all over the United States and the British Isles. She has been a featured teller at the National Scottish Storytelling Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland and performed for school audiences in Scotland, England, and Ireland. Long a favorite of Young Audiences Lou Ann is widely regarded in her home state, as well. In 1999 she was awarded the Frank Basile Emerging Stories Fellowship from Storytelling Arts of Indiana for her original work, “All Roads Lead to Home.” The Indiana Historical Society and Storytelling Arts commissioned her twice to develop and premier historical accounts for the “Sharing Hoosier History through Stories” Series. This year, she has been commissioned by Storytelling Arts of Indiana and Indiana Landmarks to develop and premiere a story based on the Charley Creek Inn in Wabash, Indiana.

Website:

Step into Lou Ann’s world at www.louannahoman.com

Selected Works:

- *Stories from the Heartland, CD*
- *The Scenic Route: Stories from the Heartland, Book*

Jim May

Types of Stories:

- World Folktales
- Family Stories

School Performance Schedule:

Performance Type	Day	Date	Starts	Ends	Appears With
Student (Primary)	Friday	October 14	10:00 a.m.	11:15 p.m.	Lou Ann Homan
Student (Middle/High)	Friday	October 14	11:45 a.m.	1:00 p.m.	Lou Ann Homan
Family	Friday	October 14	7:30 p.m.	8:30 p.m.	Lou Ann Homan and others

Background:

Jim May's storytelling style evokes memories of long summer afternoons spent swapping stories on front porches, in stable barns and at small town gatherings, where the words were chosen to bring a smile or a laugh, as well as to open the heart and soothe the spirit in the way that friends and families have depended upon stories to do throughout the ages.

Jim is an emmy award-winning storyteller, teacher, and author of the critically acclaimed Farm on Nippersink Creek (August House 1994), a memoir of eighteen stories chronicling life in the small midwestern farming community where his family has lived since the 1840's. His children's picture book, The Boo Baby Girl Meets the Ghost of Mable's Gable (Brotherstone 1992), has become a favorite among elementary school children and librarians.

A professional, freelance storyteller for over thirty years, Jim has told stories to all ages across the United States, and in Canada and Europe. His venues include school assemblies, and writing-storytelling residencies, cultural diversity/community-building workshops, as well as for author visits and staff training. He was featured at the First Annual Hoosier Storytelling Festival in 1988 and since that time he has continued to tell during events sponsored by Storytelling Arts of Indiana.

Website and Youtube

<http://www.storytelling.org/JimMay/>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOeDI23hMz0>

Selected Works:

- Purple Bogies and Other Ghost Stories
- The Boo Baby Girl Meets the Ghost of Mable's Gable