



Troubling the Waters: Fulfilling the Promise of Quality Public Schooling for Black Children

Jerome E. Morris

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Based on extensive fieldwork in schools and communities in St. Louis and Atlanta, *Troubling the Waters* captures the experiences of today's African American families like no other book. Reframing the debates around urban schooling, Jerome Morris offers an empirically based, research foundation for a new scholarly movement in African American's quest for quality schooling. In this contemporary critique, Morris counters the views by neoconservatives that racism no longer exists, while simultaneously offering a poignant analysis of the "desegregation-only" paradigm towards achieving *Brown's* promises. Essential reading for educators, scholars, and policymakers who are deeply committed to improving the education of Black children, this timely book:

- Situates African Americans' pursuit of quality education outside the traditional liberal versus conservative dichotomy.
- Revisits the role of African American culture, identity, and institutions in the educational achievement of Black children today.
- Discusses organizational characteristics within schools that constrain or support African American students' educational experiences and outcomes.
- Examines the implications for urban education and school reform.

Jerome E. Morris is an associate professor in the College of Education, and director of the "Race, Class, Place and Outcomes Research Group" at the Institute for Behavioral Research at The University of Georgia.

"In an 'either-or' world of structural versus symbolic, liberal versus conservative, and segregated versus desegregated, Jerome Morris elucidates a 'third way' approach to analyzing the plight of African Americans as they seek educational opportunities to enhance their lives. This multisite study of resilience, agency, and community provides a vision reminiscent of the African tradition of Sankofa—to return to the root in order to move forward."

—**Gloria Ladson-Billings**, University of Wisconsin-Madison

"Perhaps the most important contribution of this welcome book is the way it refocuses our attention on the character of high-achieving schools for urban African American children. It is an impressive addition to a growing body of work attesting to the particular power of social capital in the lives of poor children."

—**Charles M. Payne**, The University of Chicago

“*Troubling the Waters* comes at a time when society is demanding of urban schools massive improvements even as it is systematically abandoning these very institutions. This book will become required reading for those who seek insights into achieving the one Great Ideal, as Du Bois put it—the abolition of the color line.”

—**Garrett Albert Duncan**, Washington University, St. Louis

“While color-blind conservatives dismiss the significance of race, and race-conscious liberals pursue desegregation remedies within narrower legal parameters, Morris's timely ethnographic study reflects the wisdom of W.E.B. Du Bois: ‘The Negro needs neither segregated nor mixed schools. What he needs is education.’”

—**Jack Dougherty**, Trinity College

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