

Real Role Models: Successful African Americans Beyond Pop Culture

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All young people need good role models, and black youth especially need positive and real examples beyond the famous and wealthy people they see on *SportsCenter* highlights and MTV *Cribs*. While success as a celebrity athlete or entertainer may seem like an achievable dream, the reality is that young African Americans have a much greater chance of succeeding in the professions through education and hard work—and a mentor to show them the path. *Real Role Models* introduces high school and college-age African Americans to twenty-three black professionals who have achieved a high level of success in their chosen fields and who tell their stories to inspire young people to pursue a professional career and do the work necessary to achieve their dreams.

Some of the individuals profiled by Joah Spearman and Louis Harrison, Jr., include Leonard Pitts, Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist for the *Miami Herald*; Melody Barnes, Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council; Danyel Smith, editor-in-chief of *Vibe*; and Dr. Tim George, Chief of Pediatric Neuroscience at Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas. They and other interviewees describe their backgrounds, career paths, and desire to give back by helping others reach their goals. Representing a wide range of occupations, these real role models prove to African American youths that a whole world of successful, rewarding careers awaits them.