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Carruthers '07 Takes Radical Approach to Social Justice in Book

Aug. 31, 2018

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Illinois Wesleyan University alum Charlene Carruthers '07 – one of America's most influential activists – reimagines the Black Radical Tradition in her debut book *Unapologetic: A Black, Queer, and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements*.

Released on Tuesday, Aug. 28, *Unapologetic* acts as a guide for activists and community organizers involved in social justice movement work. The book, which quickly sold out on Amazon, draws upon Black intellectual and grassroots organizing traditions including the Haitian Revolution, the U.S. civil rights movement, and LGBTQ rights and feminist movements.

Carruthers encourages young visionaries to make the movement for Black liberation more radical, queer and feminist.

"There are so many messages, one of the most important is that incomplete stories lead to incomplete solutions," Carruthers said. "This book works to tell a more complete story about the Black radical tradition, centering the leadership of Black women and LGBTQ people."

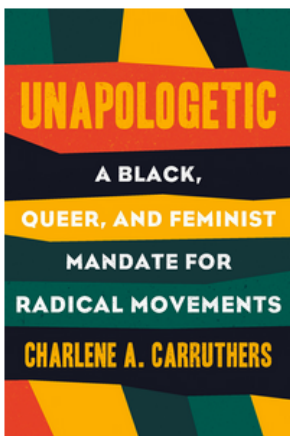
Carruthers also challenges people to revert mainstream ideas about race, class and gender, and work toward achieving collective liberation.

"I hope people are agitated into thinking about capitalism, patriarchy and anti-Blackness as systems we all have a role in dismantling. This book isn't just about what I'm against, but what I'm for – full human dignity and to be in right relationship with the land we live on," she said.

Unapologetic also articulates Carruthers' vision for strengthening social justice movements through means of principled struggle, healing justice and leadership development. The book offers a flexible model of what effective organizing can be, based on the Chicago model of activism, which features long-term commitment, cultural sensitivity, creative strategizing and multiple cross-group alliances.



Charlene Carruthers '07



"Quality relationship building, based in shared values and interests, are among the most important components. We can't do anything without quality relationships," Carruthers said.

By providing this framework for social justice movements, Carruthers hopes to inspire change across this generation of activists.

"*Unapologetic* to me means full acceptance of what it means to be human and fight for collective liberation," Carruthers said. "I want more people to be bold about wanting more than Band-Aid solutions. I want us all to work for nothing less than transformation."

A strategist, writer and leading community organizer in today's movement for Black liberation, Carruthers has over 10 years of experience in racial justice, feminist, and youth leadership development movement work. She is the founding national director of Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100), an activist member-led organization of Black 18-35 year olds dedicated to creating justice and freedom for all Black people.

Recognized as one of the top 10 most influential African Americans by The Root 100, Carruthers was also the recipient of the [Illinois Wesleyan University 2017 Outstanding](#)

[Young Alumna Award](#). After earning a bachelor's degree in history and international studies at Illinois Wesleyan, Carruthers received her master's degree in social work at Washington University in St. Louis.

By Vi Kakares '20