



The John Lewis Steptoe Place Street Co-Naming Celebration! Saturday August 27, 2016

For the past three years I have worked passionately for this day to come! The commemoration of the life and legacy of my father, John Lewis Steptoe.

There will be a celebration for the John Lewis Steptoe Street Co-Naming and the forthcoming Nationwide Tour of the play Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters. I am inviting several children's authors and illustrators to read John Lewis Steptoe's Books. Council Member Darlene Mealy will be in attendance along with other elected officials. Invited Spoken Word artists, musical performers, storytellers, and much more!

John Lewis Steptoe remains an inspirational artist, a visionary who highlighted the best of Bedford-Stuyvesant/ African American culture with pride. Let's remember him as a role model for children of all cultures who broke through barriers to change society and literature for the better.

I am asking for your financial support and/or noncash donations for this historic event. Your contribution will help inspire new young artist in the Bedford Stuyvesant community by providing them with an artistic cultural celebration. We plan to give -away school supplies, food, art supplies, haircuts, books, tickets for the upcoming Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters National Tour and much more. I would greatly appreciate your generosity in making this celebration a memorable one for everyone in the community. Your donations will be supporting this free public event.

This milestone event is **August 27th, 2016 from 11:30am to 7pm**. The Co-Naming ceremony starts at 12pm prompt.

- Your support as a sponsor is greatly appreciated.
- The event will be well attended and attract families from Bed-Stuy and the surrounding communities.
- The event and celebration will be posted on social and in print media.
- In the spirit of John Lewis Steptoe we want to give back to the community.
- I look forward to hearing from you soon, thank you in advance for your support.

Who is John Lewis Steptoe?

John Lewis Steptoe, creator of award-winning children's books, was born in Brooklyn NY on September 14, 1950. Raised on Monroe Street in Bedford-Stuyvesant. John Lewis Steptoe began drawing as a young child and received his formal art training at the High School of Art and Design in Manhattan.

In 1969, at the age of 18, his first book '*Stevie*', a story based on his experiences growing up at 840 Monroe Street in Bedford-Stuyvesant, received national attention when it was published in its entirety in Life magazine. It was hailed as "a new kind of book for black children." John Lewis Steptoe, began work on Stevie at the age of 16.

In his 20-year career, John Lewis Steptoe illustrated 16 picture books, ten of which he also wrote. He received honors and accolades including the American Library Association's Caldecott Honor for children's book illustration for: *The Story of Jumping Mouse* in 1985 and *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* in 1988, He also received

the Coretta Scott King Award for Illustration, for *Mother Crocodile* (text by Rosa Guy) in 1982, and *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* in 1988.

John Lewis Steptoe hoped that this books would lead children, especially African American children, to feel the pride of their origins. Growing up he did not see many images of African American children and wanted to change that. He frequently spoke to audiences of children and adults about his work. While accepting the *Boston Globe/Horn Book Award* for Illustration he said, "I am not an exception to the rule among my race of people I am the rule. By that I mean there are a great many others like me where I come from."

John Lewis Steptoe lived on Monroe Street for most of his life. While living on Monroe Street he was an active member of his community. He was a strong advocate for the children on the block and would frequently hand out his books to the children in the neighborhood. He felt it was important for children to have realistic role models. He was someone that you saw every day yet was known nationally for all for his great achievements.

John Lewis Steptoe was the Block Association President for several years where he was an active participant of community events for the neighborhood children. He would often visit P.S.309 to talk to the students about his books.

Following a long illness, he died on August 28, 1989, at Saint Luke's Hospital in Manhattan at the age of 38. John Lewis Steptoe was a pioneer of African American artists and illustrators of children's books.

Since his death, there have been other Community recognitions.

Exhibition of this artwork at the New York Transit Museum, 1994 to 1995.

His name is engraved on the Brooklyn Celebrity Path at the Botanical Gardens.

Public School 181, Flatbush, Brooklyn is named the John Lewis Steptoe School of the 21st Century.

His name is etched in glass at the African American Heritage Center at the Macon Branch of the Brooklyn Public Library.

Selections of his artwork from his first children's book, "*Stevie*" are permanently displayed in the Raymond Bush Playground in Bedford Stuyvesant Brooklyn.

'*Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*' has been adapted as a play traveling Nationwide and was chosen by the Children's Librarians at the New York Public Library as one of the "100 Great Children's Books/100 Years"

John Lewis Steptoe Street Co-Naming Celebration is a sponsored project of Fractured Atlas, a non-profit arts service organization. Contributions for the charitable purposes of John Lewis Steptoe Street Co-Naming Celebration must be made payable to Fractured Atlas only and are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

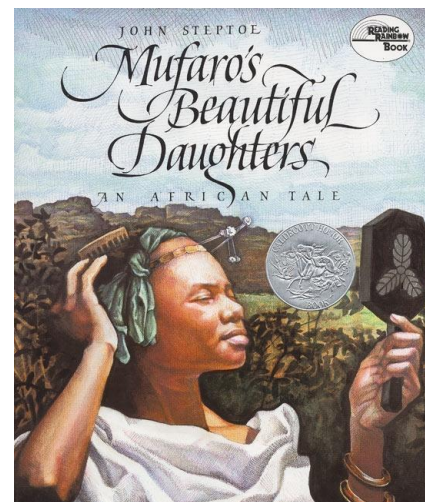
Sincerely,

Bweela Steptoe, Daughter

The John Lewis Steptoe Estate

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