



Kalisha Buckhanon

Topics

Best Selling and Award Winning Authors, Children and Young Adult Authors, Culture and Society, Inspirational Speakers, Motivational Speakers, Women's Interests

Travels From

Illinois

Bio

“At the root of my work is concern over all the lost voices we’re not hearing.” -Kalisha Buckhanon Kalisha Buckhanon’s celebrated novels *Speaking of Summer*, *Solemn*, *Conception* and school, library, and teen favorite, *Upstate*, have had her hailed as a “timeless voice for a new generation” (*School Library Journal*). For institutions, campuses, groups, and media wishing to spark conversations on progress through arts and education, avoiding or coping with the criminal justice system, or advocating for Black women and privileging women’s support structures, they will find fruitful material in her books and a rich leader in her talks. She also gives publishing seminars and writing workshops. *Essence* introduced her at age 27 as one of “Three Writers to Watch.” Her publishing career began with the auction of *Upstate*, her tale of young lovers separated by the New York prison system. *Upstate* is one of the first National Book Foundation “Literature for Justice” titles, an American Library Association ALEX Award best adult book for young adults, a New York Public Library’s “Best Books for Teens”, the only book to receive a Terry McMillan Young Author Award from the icon and a Hurston-Wright Foundation Debut Fiction nominee. Noted actor Chadwick Boseman co-narrates the audiobook which won the Audie Award in Literary Fiction. *People*, *Elle*, *Marie Claire*, *Essence*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Toronto Sun* and *Time Out London* are among the media who praised the novel, also published in the UK and France. Her follow-ups *Conception* and *Solemn* present portraits of girlhood in America with deep complexities of race and class. *Speaking of Summer* portrays a Harlem

woman's search for her twin sister, a narrative testament to women's wills to survive threats of physical violence in the present and emotional hauntings of the past. It has been listed as a "Best Of" for 40 major media outlets such as *Essence*, *O Magazine*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *Ms.*, *TIME*, *BBC*, *Buzzfeed*, *Cosmopolitan*, *USA Today*, *NBC News.com*, *LitHub* and more. As a special guest of both adult and youth audiences, Kalisha has been honored by leading institutions including the American Library Association, National Book Foundation and Friends of American Writers. Places she has spoken on writing as power and process, Black women's arts and culture, and moving young people to succeed include: American Writers Museum, Center for Black Literature at CUNY-Medgar Evers, NYU's Institute of African-American Affairs, Harlem Arts Salons, Northwestern University, University of Chicago, New York Public Libraries, Chicago Public Libraries, Brooklyn Public Library, National Book Club Conference, Literature For All of Us, and the National Council of Teachers of English. Kalisha's life story is testimony to the power of the arts, education and communities to beat the odds of structural racism, sexism and predicted socioeconomic statistics. She graduated into Phi Beta Kappa from University of Chicago with a B.A. and later M.A. in English Language and Literature, and from The New School in New York City she has an M.F.A. in Creative Writing. As a Sisters in Crime member, Kalisha was a commentator for Investigation Discovery Channel, TV One and Black Entertainment Television where she discussed true crime cases impacting women on such shows as "Deadly Affairs," "For My Man" and "Criminals at Work." She has also appeared extensively as a radio guest—WVON Chicago, BBC London, NPR's "848 with Vanessa Bush", WBAI's "Dreamleapers with Harriette Cole", WNYC's "All of It with Alison Stewart", WNYE's "Writers on Writing" and more. Kalisha writes about arts, culture, women, and justice at her blog Negression.com.

SPEECHES

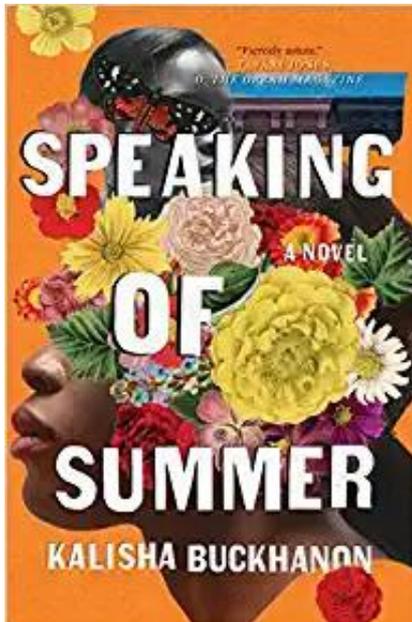
Find Spirit in Writing Kalisha draws on her personal creative history and lifelong relationship to writing, as well as her favorite writers and texts, to motivate writers of all levels to turn their gifts and ideas into tangible projects to give the world. The emphasis is on building resources, finding mentors, setting benchmarks, identifying credible and worthy opportunities, and establishing a daily or regular measurable practice.

Negression This is a celebration of Black women's collective cultural and societal contributions, amidst historical resilience to beat tremendous odds, to empower and encourage all women everywhere.

Upstate: Young People, Building Achievement, Preventing Mass Incarceration Kalisha visits schools and criminal justice, activist and community organizations to inspire students, activists and parents to overcome past experiences with the criminal justice system and prevent entry to it altogether. Takeaway exercises focus on finding strengths and future goals to motivate.

"Speaking Our Summers": Women, Safety, Support This program creates a safe space for campuses, institutions and more to learn and discuss Kalisha's findings, activism and lived experiences behind her recent novel *Speaking of Summer*, praised in Kirkus Reviews for how her portrait of "grief, fragmented memories, and inner turmoil all synthesize current scientific research on how people cope with traumatic experiences and might seek to heal."

BOOKS



Hardcover