

# Proud Shoes: The Story of an American Family

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A black woman lawyer, civil-rights activist, and Episcopal priest comes to terms with her origins as she tells of the miscegenation, slavery, and struggles that are integral parts of her family's past

The Reverend Dr. Pauli Murray (1910-1985) was a lawyer and civil-rights activist, America's first black woman Episcopalian priest, and a founder of NOW.

Patricia Bell-Scott is professor of family and child development and women's studies at the University of Georgia. She was founding editor of SAGE: A Scholarly Journal on Women and has been a contributing editor to Ms. Magazine. She has published several books, including *Life Notes: Personal Writings by Contemporary Black Women*, *Double Stitch: Black Women Write About Mothers and Daughters*, and *Flat-footed Truths: Telling Black Women's Lives* (with Dr. Juanita Johnson-Bailey). Spurred by the 1950s civil rights movement in the United States, Pauli Murray interrupted her law career for four years to investigate and document her family's history. Meticulously researched and eloquently written, *Proud Shoes* provides both an engrossing story of one family and an historical overview of race relations in the United States spanning almost one hundred years. Pauli Murray grew up in the South with her grandparents, Cornelia and Robert Fitzgerald, two strong-willed individuals of vastly different backgrounds. Cornelia, the child of a beautiful house slave and the master's son who drove away her lawful husband and repeatedly raped her, was brought up in a Southern household, both heir and slave. Robert grew up in the North, the sickly child of free black Thomas and his white wife Sarah Ann, who through her marriage "enlisted in a cause which called for raw courage and no retreats." Educated and brave, Robert refused to pass for white and waited impatiently until the Union allowed blacks into the military; his determination and heroism on and off the battlefield served as a constant example and a psychological shield against the racism of young Pauli's world. As Pauli Murray traces her family's history, she shows the Civil War from two sides and describes a world of North and South, pre- and post-emancipation, filled with family stories, laws, injustice, bravery, and heroes and villains of both races. She never shrinks from truth, and her loving pride is ever-present. -- For great reviews of books for girls, check out *Let's Hear It for the Girls: 375 Great Books for Readers 2-14*. -- From *500 Great Books by Women*; review by Erica Bauermeister

#### Other Books

Representing the Race, Profiles African American lawyers during the era of segregation and the civil rights movement, with an emphasis on the conflicts they felt between their identities as African Americans and their professional identities as lawyers.

Ⓜ Ⓜ Ⓜ Ⓜ Ⓜ . Pauli Murray, *Song in a Weary Throat: An American Pilgrimage* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 7-12, 15, 28; Pauli Murray, *Proud Shoes: The Story of an American Family* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1956), 35-47, 55-58, 275-276; Pauli Murray, ..."