

In My Own Words

Glenda Dugar

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Groundbreaking female soldier shows how hard work and solid upbringing helped her rise above a rocky childhood.

In My Own Words is the story of how Glenda Dugar, a black girl from Chicago raised as one of eight siblings in a low-income housing project in a time of great social unrest, rose to become the first female policewoman in her Fort Bragg, North Carolina, airborne unit. From exhausting drills with male soldiers to jumping out of planes and serving in various parts of the world, Dugar—who was born on the Fourth of July—tells her story with a valiant spirit and offers good-natured advice.

In writing of her childhood, Dugar relates that she never felt deprived, even though money was scarce. Loving yet strict parents (she expresses gratitude for having had a stay-at-home mom) and the support of her siblings led her to believe that she could accomplish anything she desired and was willing to work for. The author earned a degree in aviation management from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and served as assistant airfield manager at Stuttgart Army Airfield, Germany, where she assisted world leaders, including US presidents.

Dugar writes of being aware from the time she was a small child of how fragile and brief life is. All around her she saw adults so fearful of cancer that they would not even speak its name aloud; she knew young girls who had been raped or abducted; she experienced racial prejudice; and she lived through the social unrest and rioting that occurred when Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. But instead of despairing over what she knew to be the inevitability of loss, Dugar chose to accept life as a gift and live each day with the awareness that it could be her last.

Touching on topics that include the influence of television and other media on child development, the benefits of “active parenting,” the value of education, and the importance of making good choices, Dugar, now a grandparent, offers readers a sprightly and encouraging report of how a resilient nature, solid upbringing, faith, hard work, and a bit of good luck can combine to bring a person success and contentment.

This message is conveyed despite the book’s serious need for proofreading and editing for its frequent errors in grammar, sentence structure, and word usage. Examples include the missing possessive in “He was my friend brother,” awkward sentences like “The W was phonetically identifier used for the women,” and using “hackling” for “heckling” and “dawned” for “donned.” The cover art is appropriate, but it is marred by dark shadows that make it difficult to see the women’s faces clearly, and the photos within the book are grainy and often too dark. The back matter also requires proofreading and correction.

Dugar shares the keys to creating a life of adventure, achievement, and service to God and country; her work merits the attention of professionals who could help raise her writing to the level of her message.

KRISTINE MORRIS (September 23, 2013)

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