



JAHMAL COLE

Title: *The Torch of Decency: Rekindling the Spirit of Civic Organizations*

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Available at

- www.RoleModelMovement.com/shop
- Chatham Foods Market
327 E. 79th St., Chicago, IL

The Torch of Decency

Chatham, credited for decades as one of Chicago's historical claims to fame, has come under fire. Author Jahmal Cole describes an increase in crime and unemployment among one of the country's most-revered communities. Cole, however, has an ulterior motive—to educate readers about Chatham's rich history and acclaimed residents, encouraging them to become involved and restore Chatham with the charm and decency of yesteryear. A role model and mentor, Cole's passion shines through as he retells the successes and contributions of Chatham residents to African Americans and the country and spurs citizens to become involved and strive for a prosperous future.

Jahmal Cole

Jahmal Cole is the founder of Role Model Movement. He is also President of the 6th Ward Young Democrats and Vice Chairman of the Greater Chatham Alliance Education Committee. He is a recipient of the Chicago Ideas Week Fellowship Award and a certificate of appreciation from the Officer of Governor Commission for Volunteerism and Community Service. For interview requests and media inquiries, call 312-882-5028 or email jcole@rolemodelmovement.com.



THE TORCH OF DECENCY

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It is my pleasure to bring to your attention the release of *The Torch of Decency, Rekindling the Spirit of Civic Organizations*. This groundbreaking book is directed toward the decline of pride and community involvement in one of America's historical prestigious locations—Chatham. This insightful book documents the historic past and greatness of Chatham and its residents, while exposing the turbulent changes which threaten its standing as a revered African American residential community.

While this book discusses Chatham's founders, entrepreneurs, celebrities, and politicians and how they shaped the community, it also delves into the increased crime and economic woes which plague it. The purpose of the book is to restore the safety and security of the community, while providing readers with solutions and ways to rekindle the community pride that was once Chatham's claim to fame. Assuming responsibility for the preservation of the acclaimed accomplishments of Chatham's previous generations is a torch of decency all should carry.

The Torch of Decency can be purchased online at www.rolemodelmovement.com/shop for \$12.99. It is also available at Chatham Foods Market, 327 East 79th Street, Chicago, IL. Fifty free copies will be provided to schools, businesses, and other organizations who book me for speaking engagements.

For every book purchased, \$1 will be donated to the Greater Chatham Alliance.

It is my hope that you will be willing to review *The Torch of Decency* and/or interview me, Jahmal Cole, about the book. For your convenience, I have enclosed my media kit, which contains a book synopsis, my professional bio, and proposed interview questions and answers. For media review copies or press interviews, please contact me via email at jcole@rolemodelmovement.com or telephone 312-882-5028.

I look forward to talking to you about *The Torch of Decency* and how we can work together to benefit our community. Thank you in advance for your interest.

Sincerely,

Jahmal Cole

Enclosure: Media Kit

JAHMAL COLE

Author, Speaker, Mentor, Community Advocate



Jahmal Cole is the founder of Role Model Movement, a not-for-profit branch of Role Model Publishing, where he serves as a mentor to underprivileged youth. He is the author of *Athletes and Emcees*, a motivational book that inspires youth to embrace opportunities beyond their surroundings, and his newest release, *The Torch of Decency, Rekindling the Spirit of Civic Organizations*.

Jahmal is an associate board member of the Children's Research Triangle and Children's Home + Aid and a mentor for the Illinois Education Foundation. He is the President of the 6th Ward Young Democrats and Treasurer of the Greater Chatham Alliance Education Committee. In 2011, he was presented with the Chicago Ideas Week Fellowship Award from Rahm Emanuel and is a recipient of a certificate of appreciation from the Illinois Officer of Governor Commission for Volunteerism and Community Service.

Actively involved in education, Cole holds a Bachelors degree in Corporate Communications/Public Relations from Wayne State College. He received a Masters degree in Internet Branding/Marketing from Full Sail University. Cole is a tireless and dedicated volunteer, who lends his efforts to many worthy organizations.

An engaging speaker, Cole has been featured on television, radio, and other publications, including Chicago Access Network, WCRX, Medhill Reports, 6thwardblogspot, Vocalo.org, Book Tree Radio, Vocalo.org, and Kenosha News.

Jahmal Cole and his family are residents of Chatham. Visit his website at:

www.RoleModelMovement.com

An Excerpt from

THE TORCH OF DECENCY

By Jahmal Cole

Chapter One

CHATHAM STATE OF MIND

THIS BOOK OFFERS VIEWS THAT many Americans don't get to visit. The Southside of Chicago is eye-catching, and if you stay long enough, you can feel the rhythm of the community. She flaunts an unusual kind of beauty, an acquired taste. Plenty of Chicagoans live relatively close but ease their trepidation by intentionally misjudging their proximity, believing they're poles apart. Universal stereotypes—a large amount warranted, others integral to America's dogmatic history—are the reasons that many Chicagoans don't ever make the journey south.

Now, I don't mean to exhibit horror for the purpose of making Chatham residents uncomfortable, but rather to awaken us from our slumber. The frosty reality is that potential neighbors, voters, teachers, role models, and business owners lock their car doors while speeding through the Southside Safari, justifying their traffic tickets by explaining to officers their dread of adding to the 435 homicides Chicago logged in 2010, or becoming the victim of one of 14,205 reported robberies. Although residents of the Southside aren't blameworthy for every murder or robbery stat in 2010, we shoulder the brunt of the media's reproach. I recently saw five life-sized mannequins standing inside the 79th Street Red Line station wearing t-shirts that read, "One of 32 pedestrians killed last year in Chicago."

Although conscious of these unpleasant statistics, some residents don't let terror dictate their actions. Like me, they merely survive the times; doing so gives us an exclusive bravado. I honestly believe that if you can succeed on the Southside of Chicago, you can make it anywhere in the world. My idealistic viewpoint allows me to see the Southside as a free-minded entrepreneur, networking with a friend until he or she can open up a business, barbershop, or beauty salon. The Southside is so much more than a geographical location. It is a retired couple living in a historical brick bungalow with polished hardwood floors and decades of family portraits gobbling up the living room wall. The Southside is a compassionate fifth-grade math teacher who tolerates the city's budget cuts and purchases thirty-one protractors with her own money, each semester. The Southside is a monthly Block Club Association meeting in which community residents come together to discuss education, political awareness, and violence prevention.

But these things are hardly ever the focal point perpetuated by mainstream media broadcasts. News of lion attacks, flash mobs, and cobra bites incite more fear, not only amongst tourists and Chicago residents, but, sadly, amongst Southside residents, as well. That fear causes us to rethink our actions and change our behavior. Flat panel TV boxes aren't discarded out back with the usual trash. They're driven miles away and thrown into empty dumpsters. Moving into a home might be more convenient in the daytime, but some residents prefer to move their belongings in at night, out of the sight of observant criminals who have the "crabs in the bucket" mentality—if they can't have it, then you can't have it, either. I hardly ever see any couples walking through the streets of Chatham. It's also true that any member of the community that achieves success beyond the others gets pulled back down into the abyss of fear. This scandalous cycle leads to black people being scared of black people. Once scared, we're less likely to go for a walk, let alone try and make a positive change in the community. We put our faith in the understaffed Chicago Police Department, figuring they know the Chatham terrain better than we do. However, even when the police have the manpower to investigate crimes, potential eye-witnesses have adopted a "stop snitching" mentality. We cannot continue to facilitate an environment that makes it convenient to be a criminal.

Martin Luther King, Jr., had a dream, and this wasn't it. His dream was about having the opportunity to better ourselves and prove that we are worthwhile contributing members to society. His dream wasn't that we'd resort to stealing or hurting one another, instilling fear rather than inspiring greatness.

What's it going to take? When will we wake up and realize that outside help is not coming? The reinforcements are a figment of our imagination. The help we need is within each of us. Our problems aren't something we can vote our way out of. Politicians aren't the answer—we are. Chatham was great because the people demanded greatness from each other. They took to the streets in times of need, and there has been no time when the need has been greater.

Let's take the heart that we dedicate to the Occupy movements and other causes and use it toward a more worthy cause than money—our lives and the safety and livelihood of our children and our community. It's time to stop blaming the police and start helping them. It's time to stand up for what's right. I will no longer sit down and drown in the inequity of this once great community. I prefer to die on my feet than live on my knees—and if I can help it, I'm not dying. Neither is Chatham.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

WITH JAHMAL COLE

1. What inspired your book, *The Torch of Decency*?

I wrote *The Torch of Decency* because I have a genuine concern for the issues effecting Chatham. The subtitle, “Rekindling the Spirit of Civic Organizations” reveals the purpose of the book and relates to community groups like Greater Chatham Alliance, Chatham Avalon Park Community Council, Chesterfield Association, West Chesterfield Association, Park Manor, Roseland Heights, and R.A.G.E. Whatever your respective community group is, the book encourages you to join, and it also has the contact information for each of these groups.

Political support for government action isn’t an effective substitute for community action. The book encourages 6th Ward residents to view democracy from a community-level outward, as opposed to a city-level inward. Just as we wouldn’t expect big city government to mow our lawns or shovel the snow from the front of our stores, we shouldn’t expect them to choose which schools or businesses belong in our community. Those decisions can better be made by the people in the community. I hope *The Torch of Decency* rekindles the spirit of an active middle-class network dedicated to community action.

2. What makes Chatham so special?

Chatham’s special because Chatham’s a community. There’s a big difference between a neighborhood and a community. A neighborhood is a district or area with distinct characteristics or similar housing and architecture. Wicker Park on the north side of Chicago is a beautiful neighborhood with distinct characteristics. Small quaint restaurants and clothing boutiques make up that (North Loop) neighborhood.

A community, though, is vastly different—it’s not based on buildings or businesses. A community is a social group of any size. Its members reside in a specific locality, share government, and often have a common historical and cultural heritage. A community is based on its past and its present.

I say you can gentrify all you want, hoping to convince potential buyers of a neighborhood’s reputation. Gentrification can’t grow when deep wounds have grown old and decayed. A community reputation can’t be bought, and it most certainly can’t be sustained without involving its neighbors. It is the people who create the aura of the community. It’s the constituents, not the government programs, that take turns mowing the grass in the large corner lot each week. It’s the

people who get together and shovel snow out of the alleys when the city workers are overextended. It's the people who are willing to sacrifice their time on a Tuesday evening to march down King Drive with "Stop the Violence" picket signs in their hands. It's the people that wake up on Saturday mornings to attend block club association meetings in an effort to promote the health of Chatham. It's the people and their desire for safety and security that call the police and report crimes. These people make up a community. Communities work together to produce something tangible. Communities make it possible for neighborhoods to be remembered, not mourned. And Chatham is one of the most historical, remarkable, and groundbreaking communities in our nation.

3. What needs to be done to make Chatham better?

Martin Luther King, Jr., had a dream, and this wasn't it. His dream was about having the opportunity to better ourselves and prove that we are worthwhile contributing members to society. His dream wasn't that we'd resort to stealing or hurting one another, instilling fear rather than inspiring greatness.

We need to wake up and realize that outside help is not coming. The reinforcements are a figment of our imagination. The help we need is within each of us. Our problems aren't something we can vote our way out of. Politicians aren't the answer—we are. Chatham was great because the people demanded greatness from each other. They took to the streets in times of need, and there has been no time when the need has been greater.

Let's take the heart that we dedicate to the Occupy movements and other causes and use it toward a more worthy cause than money—our lives and the safety and livelihood of our children and our community. It's time to stop blaming the police and start helping them. It's time to stand up for what's right. I will no longer sit down and drown in the inequity of this once great community. I prefer to die on my feet than live on my knees—and if I can help it, I'm not dying. Neither is Chatham.

4. Should Chatham become more multicultural or stay predominantly black?

I have a real appreciation for diversity, and I believe that inside of a relationship or a community, color shouldn't be a boundary. Diversity transcends all doubts and rises above all limits; it also promotes more ideas. I'm a fan of including the people in community decisions.

REVIEWS AND ENDORSEMENTS FOR

JAHMAL COLE AND

THE TORCH OF DECENCY

"Finally, I love this book as it brings the rich history of the Chatham Community to light. It highlights our accomplishments, as well as our struggles and lets us know we have a generation coming up that will take this community to the next level."

--Worlee Glover, *Concerned Citizens of Chatham Blogspot*

"Jahmal Cole is a spirited, hilarious, and charming writer. He has a knack for creating memorable turns of phrase, and there is something improvisational and informal about his prose style that really appealed to me. I liked the fact that he solicited quotes from ordinary people to print on the back cover and when I took a minute to visit his website, I found that it looked quite professional. I saw immediately that where marketing is concerned, the author is both ambitious and enterprising, two qualities that will stand him in good stead as he pursues a wider readership."

--Writer's Digest

*"From my initial meeting of Jahmal until today I have been nothing less than impressed with this extraordinary young man. His vision, determination, and positive attitude are rare these days among young people, and it's especially refreshing to see such traits come from someone with a challenging upbringing such as Jahmal. I have forwarded his book *Athletes & Emcees* on to my younger siblings and some of my peers, as well, as a testament to determination, and as he puts it, "to hustle or grind" no matter the circumstance. Without arrogance, flash, or attitude, this young man has achieved amazing accomplishments and will only continue to do so. He will truly be an asset wherever he may end up."*

--Chicago Sun-Times Rory Foster/Advertising Director

AUTHOR'S TORCH OF DECENCY DOCUMENTS HISTORY AND BENEFITS CHATHAM'S FUTURE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(CHICAGO, ILLINOIS) – Chatham resident, author, and keynote speaker Jahmal Cole announces the release of his latest book, *The Torch of Decency, Rekindling the Spirit of Civic Organizations*. Available December 17, 2011, *The Torch of Decency* documents the historic past of Chatham and its residents, while exposing the turbulent changes which threaten its impressive standing as a revered African American middle-class residential neighborhood.

Cole's deep investment and commitment to the preservation of Chatham's history and culture is evident throughout the book. Descriptive passages reveal the diverse personalities and rich culture that make up the flavor and diversity of its neighborhoods. *The Torch of Decency* discusses Chatham's growth from infancy to the present day, and encourages all Chatham residents to become involved and give back to their community. As a testament to his commitment, a portion of the proceeds from every book will be donated to the Greater Chatham Alliance.

In his book, Cole discusses Chatham's founders, entrepreneurs, celebrities, and politicians and how they shaped the community. He also delves into the increase in criminal activity and economic woes which currently plague his beloved community, while providing readers with solutions and ways to rekindle the community pride that was once Chatham's claim to fame. According to Cole, assuming responsibility for the preservation of the acclaimed accomplishments of Chatham's previous generations is a torch of decency all should carry.

The Torch of Decency can be purchased online at www.rolemodelmovement.com/shop for \$12.99. It is also available at Chatham Foods Market, 327 East 79th Street, Chicago, IL. Chatham residents who would like to have a copy of the book personally delivered to them should contact Jahmal Cole by calling 312-882-5028 or emailing jcole@rolemodelmovement.com. For every book purchased, Cole will donate \$1 to the Greater Chatham Alliance.

Jahmal Cole, founder of Role Model Movement and Role Model Publishing, is available for book signings and speaking engagements. All speeches in and around the Chatham community will be supplemented with copies of *The Torch of Decency*.

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Jahmal Cole is the founder of Role Model Movement, a not-for-profit branch of Role Model Publishing, where he serves as a mentor to underprivileged youth. He is the author of *Athletes and Emcees*, a motivational book that inspires youth to embrace opportunities beyond their surroundings. Jahmal is an associate board member of the Children's Research Triangle and Children's Home + Aid and a mentor for the Illinois Education Foundation. He is the President of the 6th Ward Young Democrats and Vice Chairman of the Greater Chatham Alliance Education Committee. In 2011, he was presented with the Chicago Ideas Week Fellowship Award from Rahm Emanuel and is a recipient of a certificate of appreciation from the Illinois Officer of Governor Commission for Volunteerism and Community Service. Interview requests and media inquiries should be directed to Jahmal Cole by calling 312-882-5028 or emailing jcole@rolemodelmovement.com.

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—Worlee Glover, *Concerned Citizens of Chatham Blogspot*

Chatham, credited for decades as one of Chicago's historical claims to fame, has come under fire. Literally. Author Jahmal Cole describes an increase in shootings, burglaries, and unemployment among one of the country's most-revered communities. Cole, however, has an ulterior motive—to educate readers about Chatham's rich history and acclaimed residents—and to encourage them to become involved and restore today's Chatham with the charm and decency of yesteryear. A role model and mentor, Cole is passionate about Chatham's past. His passion shines through as he retells the successes and individual contributions Chatham residents have made to African Americans and the country and spurs its citizens to become involved and strive for a prosperous future.



JAHMAL COLE is a winner of the Chicago Ideas Week Fellowship Award

*For every book sold, \$1 goes to the Greater Chatham Alliance



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