

## In Honor of the Poor People's March

*By Joyce Law, PRC President 2025-27*

My heartfelt greetings to the Beloved Community! You know that I rarely post messages to Facebook. I am compelled to write now in honor of the 63rd commemoration of the Poor People's March and the tenor of my historic preservation projects. "Back in the day," during my youth, the academic season began after Labor Day. That meant the benefit of possibly having the entire month of August available for vacation and long-distance trips, which school-age youth and educators could enjoy.

At age eight, August 1963 became the strongest memory of my first long-distance trip away from Augusta. More importantly, I met at length my maternal relatives, who had participated in the Great Migration to New York starting from the push of the 1920s.

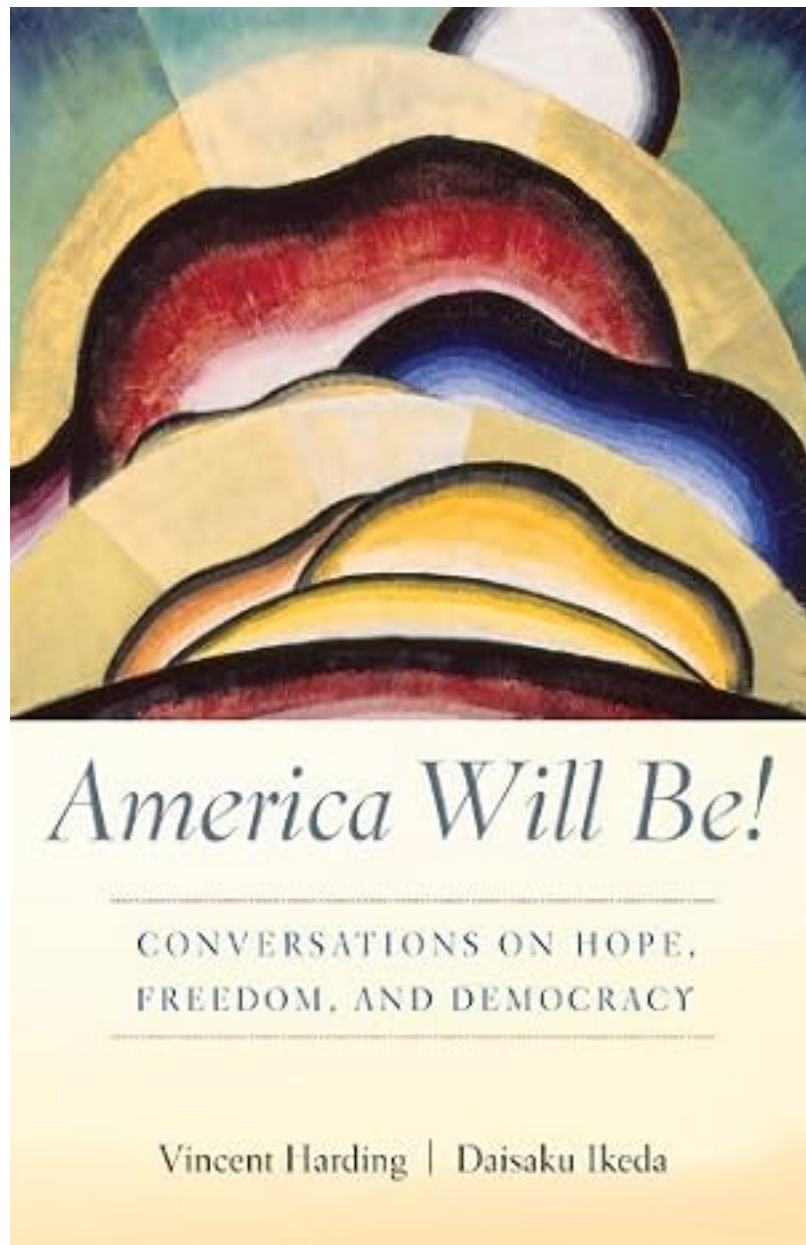
Our sedan drive on I-95 encountered the congestion of other sedans and buses pouring into Washington, D.C. I, as an elementary student, could easily detect that cars and buses filled to the brim with mainly Black people must signal something extraordinary. The massive flow was not due to a wreck ahead or rerouted traffic. The question loomed and I exerted my curious, outspoken tendency: "What is happening, Mama, that is different from the earlier part of the trip?" Mama's simple, straightforward truth, driving and keeping her eyes safely focused on the

bumper-to-bumper traffic: "It's the March on Washington. Dr. King will be speaking." Neither portion of the response was important to me at the time. However, the obvious high energy of the moment was carved into everything that I now cherish and understand.

The names and impactful perspectives of A. Philip Randolph, Bayard Rustin, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Roy Wilkins, Whitney Young, James Farmer, and John Lewis that formed the collective theoretical and logistical genius of the outdoor event are well known. There is another close associate of Rev. Dr. King, Rev. Vincent Harding, who before his death, presented a contemporary understanding of those pivotal days.

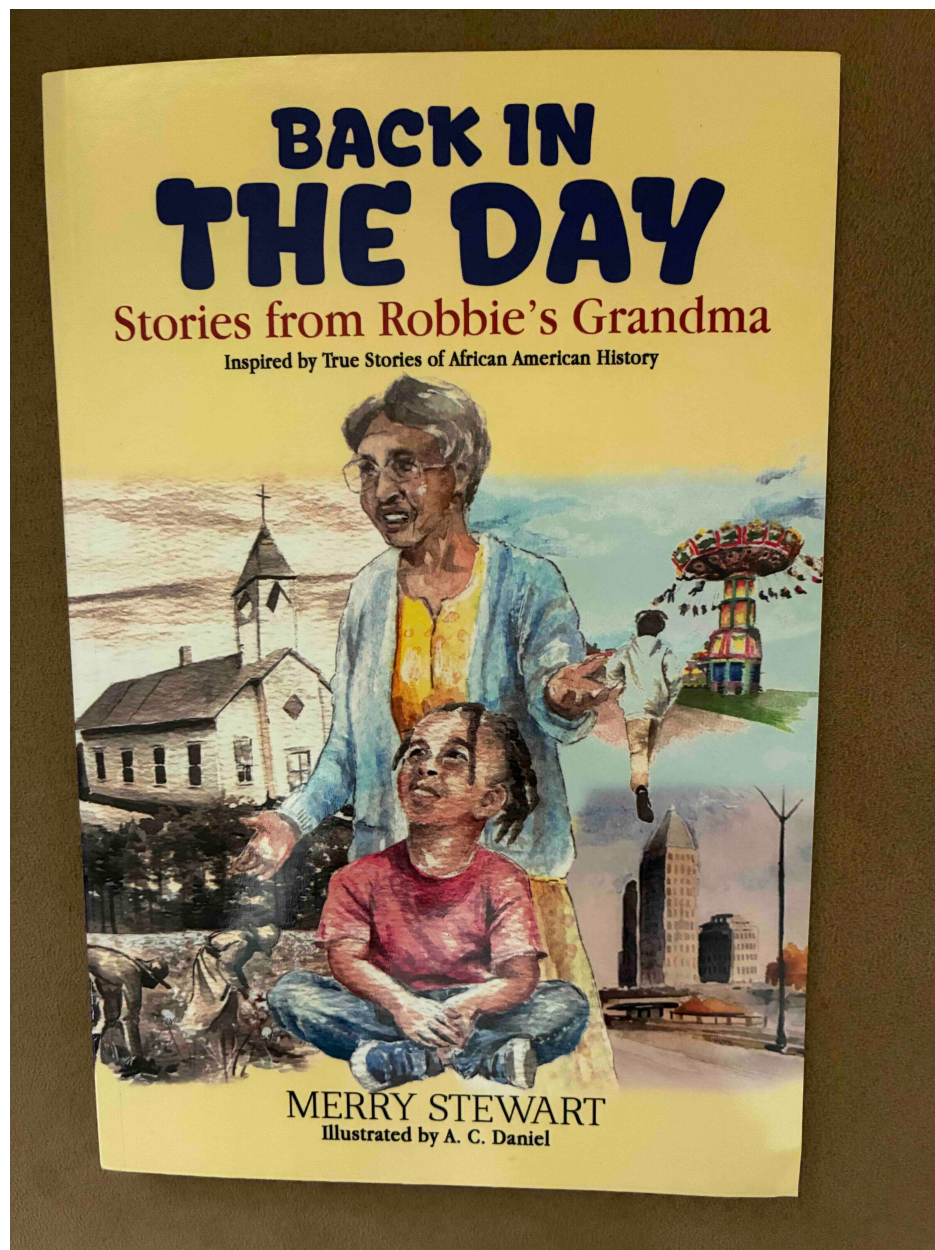
I'd like to share a significant excerpt from the dialogue published on August 5, 2013, between Buddhist philosopher Daisaku Ikeda (1928-2023) and Professor Vincent G. Harding (1931-2014). "A key condition for the continuity and development of any movement or any society is the joyful awakening of its people to their infinite potential. The March on Washington, the iconic moment of the freedom movement, was an opportunity to convey the movement's message of building a humane society— a message of vision and hope— to people all over the world." This passage, found on page 138 of the joint authors' *America Will Be! Conversations on Hope, Freedom, and Democracy*, is the simple, straightforward answer to our infinite array of questions about what to do:

firm belief in the power of our individual and collective lives.



Read the whole Ikeda-Harding dialogue. Can you also place priority on pursuing Dr. Merry Stewart's latest book launch for young readers and adults alike, Back in the

Day, Stories from Robbie's Grandma? Back in the Day's illustrations by local artist A.C. Daniel compel you to take a long drive to the country and reflect upon what affects us all, striving and thriving with dignity to fulfill our needs and dreams.



Stay cool and kool.