

**Ralph David Abernathy. *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down: An Autobiography*. (New York: Harper, 1989) 638 pp., \$25.00.**

When this book appeared, major elements of the press selected a tiny fragment for a front-page story worthy of the *National Enquirer*. Unfortunately, journalists virtually ignored the book as a whole, preferring to sensationalize Abernathy's "revelations" about the sex life of Martin Luther King, Jr. As a result, Abernathy became a pariah; when he died several months later, the recent controversy dominated many obituary notices.

As *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down* makes abundantly clear, Abernathy deserved far better. More like a state funeral. For, except for King himself, Abernathy contributed as much to the civil rights movement as any other human being. And, despite experiencing strokes, brain surgery, and partial blindness, he generated a rich historical account of both his life and the King/Abernathy portion of the movement.

Abernathy opens with a powerful evocation of growing up in rural Alabama—a wonderful, pastoral experience of farm, family, and church—made possible by his father's ability to protect his children from the ravages of segregation.

After limning his service in World War II, Abernathy chronicles the Montgomery bus boycott and other major engagements of King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). *And the Walls* also describes King's assassination and Abernathy's subsequent leadership of SCLC, including the heartache of Resurrection City and the triumph of Charleston.

Abernathy frequently likens King to Moses, himself to Joshua, and opponents to Pharaohs. Through these comparisons, he again joins King and others in interpreting the movement by updating the theology of slaves, who longed for Moses to lead them out of captivity. Thus, he contributes further evidence that slave religion—not the Great White Thinkers whom King studied in graduate school—provided the religious foundation for the struggle for civil rights.

Moreover, Abernathy confirms David Garrow's argument that King and SCLC deliberately provoked violence by Southern police.

A number of Abernathy's vivid stories are told here for the first time. For example, he recounts the tireless efforts of King and SCLC to help Carl Stokes become the first African American mayor of a major American city. According to Abernathy, when the victory celebration occurred, Stokes hogged the spotlight himself, lying to King and Abernathy and excluding them from the festivities.

Abernathy also supplies a rounded view of King. Abernathy's King sometimes contracted a "virus" and went to bed during the most dangerous moment of a campaign, but he also displayed enormous courage. This King occasionally experienced depression but had a great sense of fun, regaling friends with hilarious imitations of pompous black

ministers.

*And the Walls* does not mention the trip to Sweden to receive King's Nobel Prize; it also omits Abernathy's badly strained relationships with Coretta Scott King and Jesse Jackson. But for anyone interested in firsthand testimony about the civil rights movement, *And the Walls* belongs on the same shelf with Howell Raines's *My Soul Is Rested*, James Farmer's *Lay Bare the Heart*, JoAnn Robinson's *Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It*, and Anne Moody's classic *Coming of Age in Mississippi*.

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**James A. Banks and Cherry A. McGee Banks, eds. *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1989) 337 pp., \$18.75.**

With a rapidly increasing minority population in the United States, it is more important than ever for both future and experienced teachers to recognize and appreciate the diversity of young people enrolled in our schools. By the year 2000 it is projected that one of three or more students will be part of an ethnic minority. In some cities and states, minority background students are already the majority school population. Teachers will be facing more and more students from different ethnic, cultural, language, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds. Many classes will include special needs students who are gifted, handicapped, or both. It is also important for teachers to keep in mind that most students will represent several of these backgrounds, and their behaviors and values will be influenced accordingly. In addition, teachers will need to be sensitive to gender differences. All in all, teachers' responsibilities will increase in the coming years.

This new textbook, *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*, brings together a series of original essays by respected scholars and educators in the field of multicultural education who address a number of important issues, topics, and concerns. Multicultural education is viewed as an ongoing process and as a "supplement to — rather than replacement for — more specialized studies of ethnic and specialized groups." Multicultural education is a result of social unrest of the 1960s and 1970s and has as its goal to help young people develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes to function as effective citizens within their own microculture, the macroculture of the United States, and other macrocultures within the global community of nations. The editors encourage a comprehensive study of multicultural education and a specialized study of ethnic and