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RICHMOND, Virginia – A woman who is a highly accomplished journalist in her own right has written a book chronicling the careers of 24 notable Black women journalists, a dynamic page-turner that will be released in early November and can be purchased on Amazon and bndimc.org.

“Truth Tellers: The Power and Presence of Black Women Journalists since 1960” is a fitting tribute to some of journalism’s Black female trailblazers and was written by Bonnie Newman Davis, who began her labor of love seven years ago while working as an endowed professor at her alma mater, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. The book was published by Bridge-Bae Press.

Davis, managing editor of the *Richmond Free Press*, said she could think of no better way to honor women who paved the way for her and other Black female journalists than to pen a book about some of them. She got the idea 15 years ago while teaching at Virginia Commonwealth University and writing articles for the National Association of Black Journalists’ magazine, which she said featured Black men journalists much more than Black women though Black women were also toiling in the industry and making their mark.

Before writing her book, Davis and four contributing writers interviewed the two dozen women who have worked in newsrooms and TV and radio stations across the country. Her work details the good, the bad and the ugly of what they endured.

For example, “Truth Tellers” mentions one reporter who was forced to sleep in a funeral home while covering the civil rights movement because she wasn’t allowed to stay at a hotel. Another chapter painfully describes the treatment one journalist experienced while covering KKK rallies – including being called a racial slur by a newsroom colleague.

“That was shocking, the audacity that so-called professionals would do that,” Davis said of the woman’s colleague’s actions. “It just makes your heart hurt to know that people had to go through that because they were pursuing a career.”

Learning about the atrocities and indignities some of the women faced while working was eye-opening and disheartening for Davis, who has some professional battle scars of her own.

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She grew up in Greensboro, North Carolina, and was in the sixth grade in 1968 when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Bobby Kennedy were assassinated. After graduating from high school, Davis obtained her bachelor's degree in English from N.C. A&T, which since has become the nation's largest HBCU. While attending A&T, she interned for the *Wilmington Star-News* and the *Greensboro Daily News* and met many successful Black women journalists.

Davis credits A&T for a lot of her success and grew emotional recently when talking about the tremendous impact the institution has had on her life.

"I traveled to conferences all over the country when I was a student at A&T," Davis said. "I met Sandra Hughes, who is among TV journalism royalty, and Pam Johnson, the first Black woman publisher of a daily newspaper. I left A&T with so much when I graduated, including a full ride to obtain my graduate degree at Michigan. I was considered a star at A&T. I never wore it on my sleeve, but I was a star because of how well A&T prepared me. I was and still am just so humbled and grateful by it all."

Davis interned at *The Louisville Times* on a minority scholarship before enrolling in graduate school at Michigan, where she earned a master's degree in journalism with a minor in African American Studies. Recently, she was inducted into A&T's Journalism and Mass Communication Hall of Fame.

Davis is grateful to have finally finished her book, which, she acknowledged, was a long time coming.

"I'm excited about it," she said. "For me, finishing this book is coming full circle, and my spirit is filled knowing that in just a few weeks people will be able to purchase it. I am confident my book will appeal to anyone who wants to learn about strong Black women, not to mention Black women who've produced some of the best journalism this country has ever seen.

"I hope everyone who purchases a copy of my book will enjoy it," Davis continued. "I hope the women it features take a much-deserved bow for their accomplishments. But most especially, I hope my book motivates young Black women who aspire to become journalists, or anyone who wants to write a book, not to let anything stand in their way."

For more information about Davis' book or to host a book signing, please call: (804) 683-7203.

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