

times, clichéd, including images of "mile-high apple and cherry pies" (13). These gaps (some of which may understandably be based on limited sources) contribute to the sense that Fultz's Donna Reed is, like the fictional wife on *The Donna Reed Show*, too good to be true. Tantalizingly thin in some parts, Fultz's biography nevertheless offers important corrections to the often simplistic perceptions of Donna Reed and convincingly shows readers her larger political and historical roles.

*My Iowa Journey: The Life Story of the University of Iowa's First African American Professor*, by Philip G. Hubbard. Singular Lives: The Iowa Series in North American Autobiography. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999. xvi, 193 pp. Illustrations, index. \$22.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY ROLAND L. GUYOTTE, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, MORRIS

As its title indicates, this modest memoir records the career of the University of Iowa's first African American faculty member, Philip G. Hubbard, appointed as assistant professor in the Department of Hydraulics and Mechanics in 1954. Hubbard advanced to full professor, founded two companies, consulted with the likes of the Office of Naval Research, the General Motors Institute, and the Agency for International Development, and became dean of academic affairs in 1965 and vice president for student services in 1972 before retiring in 1991. But this book is much more than an academic success story.

Writing carefully, like the engineer he is, Hubbard emphasizes both family and profession, quietly reminding readers of the centrality of race. His first sentence points the way: "Our family origins are in the Bible Belt of small-town north central Missouri, and my childhood was strongly influenced by an emphasis on religion, a work ethic, and a discriminatory restriction of opportunity" (3). When the family moved to Des Moines, his schoolteacher mother found work only as a clothing store elevator operator because the public schools, though desegregated, did not hire black teachers. Hubbard learned to climb steps to the balcony in movie theaters and to swim at the YMCA only on late Saturday afternoons. As a University of Iowa undergraduate in the early 1940s, he was easily exempted from compulsory ROTC "apparently because the army was not interested in recruiting minority officers" (45). A decade later, as a newly minted Ph.D. contemplating a job at Northwestern University's Institute of Technology, Hubbard discovered that a real estate agent would show his family only homes that "were badly run down and in unattractive neighborhoods" (85). He declined the offer.

Remaining at Iowa, Hubbard found mentors at the university, but made his own path. He worked hard at his family life, just as at his job, reading to his five children at bedtime and then returning to his laboratory, remodeling family homes, and organizing automobile vacations. He strove to help and inform, lending the university's black fraternity his basement for meetings, speaking at "numerous little churches" in Iowa towns on "Race Relations Sundays," and becoming president of Iowa City's Kiwanis. Launched on a second career in academic administration in the midst of the 1960s, he took what came his way—"I merely developed plans, did my part, and expected others to do likewise" (126)—as he moved the university away from *in loco parentis*, forged ties with historically black colleges, and oversaw construction of the Iowa Center for the Arts.

That Hubbard accomplished so much is a tribute to his personal qualities and his priorities. Because of its detail, his memoir is a valuable account of race relations in the urban Midwest, of American academic life at mid-century, and of the University of Iowa. It supplements Stow Persons's more analytical *The University of Iowa in the Twentieth Century* (1990), which, like most of the academic leaders Persons chronicles, slights race in the university's history.

*Iowa Folk Artists*, by Jacqueline Andre Schmeal, photographs by Charles Brill. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1998. x, 126 pp. Illustrations, bibliography. \$24.95 cloth.

*Backyard Visionaries: Grassroots Art in the Midwest*, edited by Barbara Brackman and Cathy Dwigans. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998. xiv, 146 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$39.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY GREG OLSON, MISSOURI STATE ARCHIVES

Our tendency to use the term *folk art* to refer to anything from a traditional Amish quilt to a backyard grotto, coupled with our insistence on viewing nonacademic artists as bizarre outsiders, have helped to derail our understanding of the place these artists and their creations occupy in our society. The authors of two recent books examine the work of several folk, grassroots, and contemporary artists in an effort to better understand their social function and the nature of their inner visions.

Jacqueline Andre Schmeal's *Iowa Folk Artists* is a portrait of 16 artists whose work represents a cross section of contemporary and folk art. Schmeal includes two types of artist in her survey: those who are actively carrying on traditional folk arts, and those who use traditional

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