

Denver, 1902.

COLORFUL HISTORY

I feel dishonest taking a fee from you.

You've got two strikes against you to begin with.

First of all, you're a lady, and second, you're colored.

Dr. Justina Ford.

First licensed African-American woman doctor in Colorado.

"I was born in 1871. Growing up in Knoxville, Illinois..."

Is that little girl dissecting a frog?

"...people thought I was strange."

"My mom was a nurse. She understood me."

When you're old enough, the family will help pay for your medical school.

"They probably didn't think I'd make it."

Hering Medical College, 1899.

"I DID, though, I became a DOCTOR."



"After graduation, I moved to Denver."

"I saw all types of patients there."

"Most were poor and couldn't afford treatment, so I would let them pay with things like food and auto repair."

"They wouldn't let me work at a hospital."

"So I opened my own practice at my house in Five Points."

"I even learned a few different languages to better help them."

"In 50 years running my own practice, I delivered almost 7,000 babies!"

"Then I finally worked at Denver General Hospital."

"Even then, I was still the only female African-American doctor in Denver."

"When I was 80, I received a human rights award."

"I got so much love from the people I helped throughout my 50 years as a doctor."

"And even though I wasn't recognized at the time, eventually history caught up."

"I kept practicing medicine until two weeks before I died..."

"...the very next year in 1952."

Written by R. Alan Brooks
Illustrated by Karl Christian Krumpholz



Teacher Guide



Dr. Justina Ford

Written: R. Alan Brooks

Art: Karl Christian Krumpholz

Teacher Guide: Tim Smyth

Discussion Questions

Elementary

- *What do you want to be remembered for doing in your life? What obstacles might you face in making it come true?
- *What is Dr. Ford's legacy?
- *If you could interview Dr. Ford, what are three questions you would ask?

MS/HS

- *When Justina Ford applied for her medical license, the clerk told her, "I feel dishonest taking a fee from you. You've got two strikes against you to begin with. First of all, you're a lady, and second, you're colored." Discuss the meaning of this quote and its importance.
- *Dr. Ford is quoted as saying, "folks make an appointment and whatever color they turn up, that's the color I take them." Discuss the meaning of this quote and why she felt this way.
- *What do you want your legacy to be? What obstacles might you face in making this a reality? What is Dr. Ford's legacy?
- *If you could interview Dr. Ford, what are three questions you would like to ask her?

Comic Analysis

- *Using panel 1.2, discuss the quote from the medical license fee clerk. How does the look on Dr. Ford's face help explain how she feels about the statement?
- *Using panel 1.3, describe how the men felt about Ford dissecting the frog. Why would they feel this way?
- *Using panel 2.2, describe the lengths to which Dr. Ford went to serve her patients.
- *Using panel 2.5, what is the textual evidence to explain Dr. Ford's quote of "...eventually history caught up."

Lesson Ideas by Content Area

Social Studies

- *Compare Dr. Ford to other medical pioneers – such as Mary Seacole who also struggled as a black female nurse (<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/news/mary-seacole/>)
- *Dr. Ford died in 1952 – what else was happening in the United States for Civil Rights? What might she have thought?
- *Research the Five-Points neighborhood and discuss why it was a good place for Ford to settle.
- *After watching the PBS video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGbht7gM0z4>) discuss the impact of Ford – especially after hearing from people who were delivered by Ford.

Art



Teacher Guide



Using http://staging.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMFEMX_Dr_Justina_L_Ford_Denver_CO

Students can conduct research on the Dr. Ford memorial sculpture. They can then design their own sculpture and/or memorial plaque to Ford. The lesson can be take one step further by researching other historical actors who have faced similar obstacles and design a memorial for them. Another option is to have students create a memorial of themselves and what they would want their plaque to read.

Resources

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WGbht7gM0z4> – 30-minute Rocky Mountain PBS video.

Discusses slavery, segregation, women’s rights, and US history. There are many wonderful pictures and quotes from Ford woven throughout.

<https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/justina-ford> - biographical information with a read aloud option. Contains pictures, quotes, and links for further research.

<https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/justina-ford-house> – information on Ford’s house and museum. Site has a read aloud option with the ability to choose reading lexile.

http://staging.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMFEMX_Dr_Justina_L_Ford_Denver_CO - information on the Dr. Ford memorial sculpture

<https://americacomesalive.com/2012/02/15/justina-ford-1871-1952-physician/> - bio, pictures, quotes

<http://www.blackpast.org/aaw/ford-dr-justina-1871-1952> – short and basic biographical information

https://cfmedicine.nlm.nih.gov/physicians/biography_118.html - short biographical information with several quotes and pictures.

Colorful History Presents: Justina Ford

PAGE 1 - 4 panels

Panel 1 (big panel): JF at a window paying her fee. The sign above the window says “Medical License Fees”. The white clerk is looking like he pities her. She looks resolved.



Clerk: I feel dishonest taking a fee from you.

Clerk: You've got two strikes against you to begin with.

Clerk: First of all, you're a lady, and second, you're *colored*.

Caption: Denver, 1902.

Title: Dr. Justina Ford

Subtitle: 1st licensed African-American woman doctor in Colorado!

Panel 2: JF as a kid, looking down, concentrating on her work with dissection tools. Frog legs sticking up, kids and adults in the background looking on disapprovingly.



Caption (JF): “I was born in 1871. Growing up in Knoxville, Illinois--”

Caption (JF): “--people thought I was strange.”

ADULT in BACKGROUND: Is that little girl dissecting a frog?

Panel 3: JF's mother, in a nurse uniform, hugging her.

Caption (JF): “My mom was a nurse. She understood me.”

Mom: When you’re old enough, the family will help pay for your medical school.

Panel 4: JF, marching at her graduation from medical school.

Caption (JF): “They probably didn’t think I’d make it.”

Caption (JF): “I *did*, though. I became a doctor.”

Caption: Hering Medical College, 1899

PAGE 2 - 5 panels

Panel 1 JF standing, smiling in front of her house, as if she’s posing for a picture.

Caption (JF): “After graduation, I moved to Denver.”

Caption (JF): “They wouldn’t let me work at a hospital.”

Caption (JF): “So I opened my own practice at my house in Five Points.”

Panel 2 JF treating someone in her office. Through the door, we can see people lined up, of many different ethnicities.

Caption (JF): I saw all types of patients there.

Caption (JF): Most were poor and couldn’t afford treatment, so I would let them pay with things like food and auto repair.

Caption (JF): I even learned a few different languages to better help them.

Panel 3 JF, age 80, working in a hospital, delivering a baby.

Caption (JF): In 50 years of running my own practice, I delivered almost 7000 babies!

Caption (JF): Then I finally worked at *Denver General Hospital*.

Caption (JF): Even *then*, I was still the only female African-American doctor in Denver!

Panel 4 JF, at an awards ceremony.

Caption (JF): When I was 80, I received a human rights award.

Caption (JF): I kept practicing medicine until two weeks before I died--

Caption (JF): --the very next year, in 1952.



Panel 5 The sculpture of Dr. Justina Ford that's near her house.



Caption (JF): I got so much love from the people I helped throughout my 50 years as a doctor.
Caption (JF): And even though I wasn't recognized at the time, eventually history caught up.

NOTE: These accolades can be listed below the last panel.

Caption: 1985: Admitted to the *Colorado Women's Hall of Fame*.

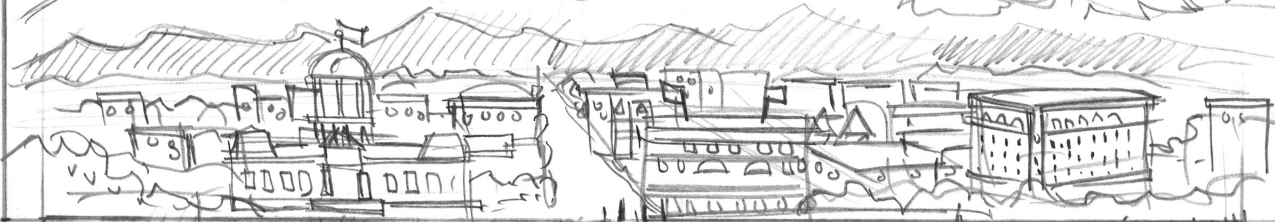
Caption: 1988: Office converted into the *Black American West Museum and Heritage Center*.

Caption: 1989: Named a "Medical Pioneer of Colorado" by the *Colorado Medical Society*.

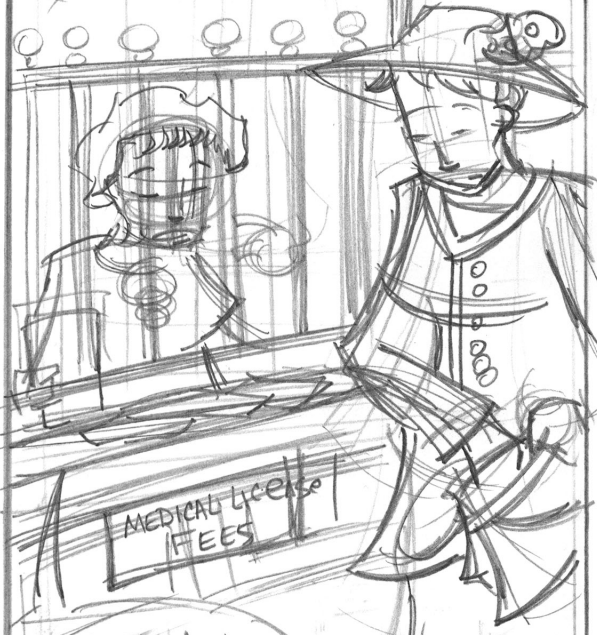
References:

1. https://cfmedicine.nlm.nih.gov/physicians/biography_118.html
2. http://www.historycolorado.org/sites/default/files/files/Kids_Students/Bios/Justina_Ford.pdf
3. <http://www.blackpast.org/aaw/ford-dr-justina-1871-1952>

Denver 1902



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MEDICAL LICENSE FEES

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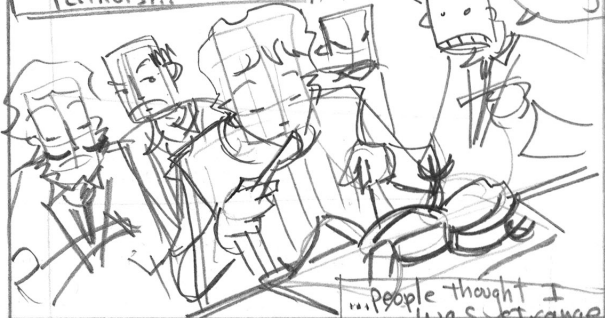
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Hering Medical College, 1899

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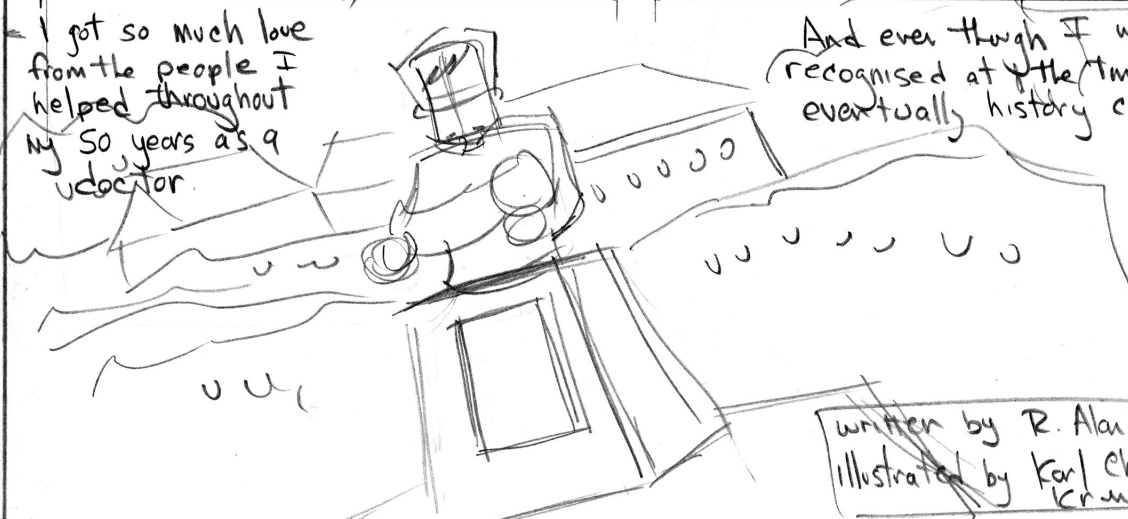
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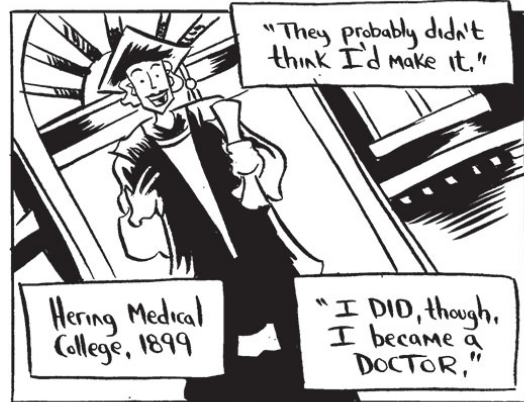
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