



**PRESS RELEASE
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Meridian High School Graduate Donates the First Title of His Multi Award-Winning Children's Book Series to T.J. Harris Upper Elementary School's Fifth Graders

Class of 1994 Meridian High School Graduate and Children's Book Author J. Dillard is donating a free copy of "J.D. and the Great Barber Battle," which is based on his childhood in Meridian, Mississippi.

MERIDIAN, MS - (DECEMBER 9, 2022) – Fifth-grade students at T J Harris Upper Elementary School will receive a free copy of "[J.D. and the Great Barber Battle](#)," written by critically acclaimed Children's Book Author and Meridian native **J. Dillard**. Dillard will visit the students at 12:10 p.m. on Monday, December 12, 2022. "J.D. and the Greater Barber Battle" is the first title in his multi-award-winning children's book series, "[J.D. the Kid Barber](#)" (**Penguin Random House**). Dillard attended the former Witherspoon Elementary School and is a member of Meridian High School's Class of 1994.

"It gives me such pride and joy to come back and do a book giveaway in Meridian, a city that raised me and prepared me for the future," states Dillard. "I look forward to reaching back and showing support to a city and state that supported me during my upbringing. It is very overwhelming, remarkable and touching."

Dillard's childhood in Meridian is the foundation for the entire children's book series. Like the main character J.D., Dillard discovered his talent for barbering after his mother gave him a botched haircut shortly before the first day at Witherspoon Elementary School. Initially, he attempted to wear a cap to avoid being ridiculed by his peers. However, he had to remove his cap to enter the school building. Then his friends and other students noticed the botched haircut and started making fun of him. Weary from their ridicule, J.D. decided he would try to cut his hair. That is when he discovered his natural talent for barbering and has since developed a career that spans more than 20 years.

"J.D. and the Great Barber Battle is a funny and relatable read," states Dillard. "In writing the book, I want young readers and the world to know about the importance of finance, family values, a loving community, comradery and health."

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In addition to being a children's book author, Dillard is a celebrity barber that services many A-list celebrity clients. After graduating from Meridian High School, he earned a full football scholarship to Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, Alabama. While attending college, at age 22, he became a licensed barber and opened his first barbershop, also located in Tuskegee. Through his worldwide travels with his celebrity clients, Dillard has visited more than 46 U.S. states and 12 international countries.

"Mississippi is a family-oriented state that I truly adore," states Dillard. "I have fond memories of my upbringing in Meridian. I was reared with strong family principles and with both a male and female parent in the home. I also had a supportive community and local church that were highly respected and instilled great values in me."

The additional book titles in the "J.D. the Kid Barber" series are "[J.D. and the Family Business](#)" and "[J.D. and the Hair Show Showdown](#)." New York-based illustrator, animator and cartoonist [Akeem S. Roberts](#) is the book series illustrator. His clients include "New York Magazine," "Men's Health," "Condé Nast," "Harper Collins" and more. English and Spanish versions of book series can be purchased where books are sold globally.

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Images of J. Dillard are [here](#). Images of J.D. the Kid Barber are [here](#).

About J. Dillard

"Follow Your Clippers" is the lifelong mantra that continues to inspire [J.Dillard](#) to achieve phenomenal success as a [children's book author](#), a Master Barber, and a [barberpreneur](#)™. A trailblazing leader, Dillard is widely credited with influencing the barber industry's dynamic growth. His mission is to positively impact professional barbers through his ingenuity that is motivated by his passion, created by his vision, produced by his belief, and ignited by his dedication.

About Akeem S. Roberts

His comic debut was in the Regular show special with BOOM Studios, and, more recently, he worked with Hasbro on issue 98 of My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic. In 2021, Akeem participated in Cartooning While Black, an art gallery show that discusses racial relations in a playful and charming way, along with other Black New Yorker cartoonists in Manhattan.

About "J.D. and the Great Barber Battle"

J.D. has a big problem—it's the night before the start of third grade and his mom has just given him his first and worst home haircut. When the steady stream of insults from the entire student body of Douglass Elementary becomes too much for J.D., he takes matters into his own hands and discovers that, unlike his mom, he's a genius with the clippers. "J.D. and the Great Barber Battle" is a 2022 Charlotte Huck Award Honor Book. It is also "cited among the New York Public Library Best Books for 2021, the 2021 Chicago Public Library Best of the Best Books list, the 2021 *School Library Journal* Best Books list, and the Texas Bluebonnet Award's 2022 - 2023 Master List."