

A Chance To...

MY PUBLIC JOURNAL

Darius Pettway



A Chance To...

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Written by Darius Pettway

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To those who have been told they couldn't break the cycle of prison and poverty. You all are not alone. You're going make it out.

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Message to My Readers

I sincerely feel led to insist that you learn from the mistakes I've made in my life. Let me show you the perseverance and mental toughness it took for a troubled teen from Detroit, with no guidance, to overcome systematic oppression and prove to his father he could beat the odds—by becoming a first-generation college student, athlete, and graduate. All children deserve a chance to make a mistake and learn from it, without it costing them their livelihood. What happened to me put many obstacles in my way of trying to become a contributing member of society. I don't want that to happen to anyone else.

This book was neither written or intended to cause hurt or diminish anyone's character in any way, shape, or fashion. It was written to spark a conversation with employers, key political representatives, and decision-makers to explain why reforming juvenile justice legislations is essential in restoring opportunity to youth nationwide. According to Carmen E. Daugherty, policy director for Campaign for Youth Justice, it is estimated that over 200,000 youth under the age of eighteen are sent into adult correctional facilities each year, frequently for misdemeanor nonviolent offenses. Join me as I fight for cultural and social reconstruction.

It is evident to say that our nation's potential is incumbent on the success of our youth. It is my hope and prayer that my story and this book will give truth and courage to anyone who wants to make a difference in his or her life. For this reason, I feel fully committed to proclaiming that it is not where you start as much as it is how you finish.

To all those who may feel incarcerated now, I promise you there is a way out of the four brick walls that surround you, not only within the criminal justice system, but the communities we all live in. This is a

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battle we all must fight, and if you believe in this mission, please join me as we break down the walls of inequality facing our youth.

Darius Pettway

Foreword

I remember Darius, a bright, articulate young man. I remember the hunger in his eyes to accomplish his goals. I remember his work ethic: every day he came with homework completed; every time he had a question he was in my office getting additional help. I remember Darius as a student to whom other students were drawn. His commitment to himself and his future made a positive difference in the classroom. What I remember the most, though, is Darius's desire to help and inspire others. It was clear to me this came from his upbringing—the love, support, and interaction with his family. It was an honor and pleasure to work with Darius, to help him move forward towards his dreams. It is an honor to continue to know him.

— Ms. Deborah Olson-Dean

Retired college professor



Professor Deborah Olson-Dean