

# Biography of august wilson



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An individual who can rise from the brutal life, beneath the bottom rung of the ladder to the top is able to achieve remarkable things in life. Renowned playwright August Wilson a winner of Pulitzer prizes and many other awards for his tremendous works is an example of such person. He grew up in a lower class African American family faced the difficulties as a black person and turned himself into the inspiring play writer. The Play is about ushering reality to live through stagecraft and execution. August Wilson wrote the play *Fences* about his struggle in life and became one of the most influencing stories in the history of America. The playwright portrays the drama set in Pittsburgh in the 1950s, with the protagonist Troy Maxson. August Wilson's drama such as *Fences* not only documents the struggle and difficulty of racism but also teaches the hardships he faced as an African American.

August

Wilson was born Fredrick August Kittle on April 27, 1945, to Daisy Wilson and Fredrick Kittle. His father was a German immigrant, who rarely visited his family. Wilson spent his early life in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania ghetto called the Hill. He acquired an early pride in his legacy through his mother who worked as a janitor to support her family. As Wilson said, " My mother taught me how to read. She had six kids taught us all how to read. I learned how to read when I was four. She kept books around the house; it was very important. We had a time that we would all sit down and she would read a few pages and then she would let us go out and play" (Shafer, 1999, p. 2). At the age of 12, he was a regular person at the local library in Pittsburgh. According to Shafer (1999), " As child Wilson suffered the effects of racism in America when his family tried to move into a mostly white neighborhood, bricks were thrown through the windows and when he when to a largely

white high school, white students left ugly, racist not on his desk" (p. 2). At the same time, Wilson was frustrated by the rampant racism and difficulty he experienced in several schools. In his early age, he was heavily influenced by other styles that it was difficult for him to find his own but the civil right movement in 1968, inspired him. He was an unexceptional student who developed a reputation for yelling results out in class. The mostly white provincial high school he studied in also offered him inhuman dosages of racial discrimination. When he turned in 20 pages scrupulous written essay on Napoleon, his teacher who would not trust a black child could not do that great on his own accused Wilson of plagiarism. Wilson habitually finds written messages on his carrel read " Nigger go home". At home, his family had to experience racial provocation hitch along the white neighborhood in Pittsburgh. Wilson suffered racial despise as the only black student in his high school and in the end, at the age of 15, he got sick of the racism that surrounded him. He dropped out of school in the ninth grades. However, his education did not end: he derived his education and experiences from his neighborhood local library. He began to educate himself with the Negro section of the public library. Wilson discovered works of the African American people like Harlem Renaissance and other black writers. When he read the works for the authors such as Ralph Ellison, Langston Hughes, and Anna Bontemps, Wilson realized that African American could be successful in the artistic endeavor without compromising their traditions. He spent the significant times of his life in the Pittsburgh local library where he individualistic studied an extensive subject from kinds of the literature of different writers. Wilson earned his honorary high school diploma from exhaustive used of Carnegie local library of Pittsburgh. According to the <https://assignbuster.com/biography-of-august-wilson/>

article Putting black culture on stage Gantt (2009) says, " After his father's death in 1965, August Wilson changed his name from Frederick August Kittle to August Wilson in part to honor his mother, but also an act of defining his own identity" (p. 4).

Wilson's major dream for his life career was to be a writer. Although his mother wanted him to become a lawyer, he continues with his writing career. This issues created tension with his mother; she got fed up with his writing career, which she considered as his lack of direction. She later forced him to leave the family home. According to Gantt (2009), " He spent the next two years in the series of jobs until he enlisted into the United States Army, but securing a discharged after one year" (p. 4). He returned back to Pittsburgh and started to works in various hard jobs such as porter, short order cook, gardener, and dishwasher. Wilson began his writing career as a poet, rather than dramatist. Wilson started to write on the counter in the bars, local cigar store and cafeteria longhand on table towels and fascinated to watch the characteristics of other people around him. He had spent some few years of his life in reading widely of the different books from the other writers. He bought hundreds of jazz records and playing them over and over. Wilson had listened to all kind of ordinary people speaking on the streets of which he formed the foundation for his later work in drama. " Wilson turned to playwright during the black movement in the United States of America. He began writing one-act plays to raise the consciousness of his community" Breaking Barriers (Shafer, 1999, p. 2). He submitted five plays, which were all rejected. However, he preserved and in 1982, his play *Ma Rainey's Bottom* was accepted.

Wilson struck gold with the drama of *Fences*, which hit Broadway Theater set in the 1950s. The drama *Fences* is about African American Troy Maxson, an aggressive man who had an ongoing imaginary battle with racial problems. The main character in the drama was Troy Maxson a garbage collector whose dreams to playing professional baseball was hindered by racism when baseball was segregated, and members of Troy's Negro League did not stand a chance for advancement. Maxson's bitterness made him deny his son the athletic success that was not possible for Black in the past. Putting black culture on stage (Gantt, 2009) says, unable to read, he spent his life working as a garbage man, a menial job that does little more than put food on the table and remind Troy how far constantly how far he has fallen from his dreams (p. 10). Wilson's *Fences* characters, Troy is complex a man who had moral lapse; he worked tirelessly to provide for his family. His life based on supporting his family well and to make sure, they had the comfort that he did not get in his childhood due to racial problems. He was also influenced by his own abusive childhood and therefore he became an abusive father who ruled his children. He had a crucial life in his early childhood and career due to prejudice, racial, and fatherly abandonment he reflected that through his work as an African American. A lot of imagery created where Wilson used the characters of Troy, his family, and friends in the drama of *Fences* to express out his life experiences, his hardship, and the horrifying difficulty African American faced throughout the generation. The character Rose who wanted a fence built is to hold her family from the danger of racism. The fence in the play is a rich symbol that conveys the barriers of a racist society. The racism Wilson encountered early in his life led him to write a play about the racism he faced throughout his life and also other African American.

Similarly, when Troy was at the age of 14, he was forced to leave home because of his cruel father. Troy and Wilson both faced hardship in their early lives and it defined them greatly. Because of the toll of severe racism, Wilson had difficulty to attain the education he needed to become a playwright as he had dreamed. One of the most profound Wilson has learned in his life that made him achieved his highest aspiration and overcome his worse challenges, he identifies and applied the principle and natural law that governs the results he was seeking. Wilson's drama of *Fences* exemplifies the great wrestle between the proverbial and symbolic definition of the humanity of blackness.

According to Brewer (2008) indicates, *Fences* Wilson's Pulitzer Prize-winning play from 1987, examine more explicitly than any other by the playwright the severe, cyclical influence of father onto son (p. 4). *Fences* explore the experience of one black family that live in the era of segregation and a burgeoning of black rights. The fence, which Troy built in front of his house served as a symbol of segregations as well as the general psychological need to build a fortress where Blacks people inside or interior can set themselves off from the white dominant world around them. From the other angle, *Fences* represent the geographical effects of racism in general. The divisive effects of whiten power inflicted upon African American society. Throughout the play, its characters are forced to define their world term of how it is limited by a racist system of white social and economic power. For instance, Troy's workplace is organized according to a racial hierarchy privilege since exclusively white men were hired to drive the company's garbage trucks while Black men were hired as garbage collectors.

Furthermore, much of the characteristics relied on pointing out their status as people of color in order to describe their position in relation to white power. Therefore, Wilson's play depicted how racism was affected the everyday lives of Black people in America. In addition, Wilson exposes through the concrete experiences of one family racism's many effects on the African American community in the 1950s at large. The drama *Fences* gives a palpable reality to the abstract mechanism of racism and white power. It also reveals the pain as well as the aspiration and opportunities withheld from the Black characters. Wilson disclosed the psychological complexity and intensely tiresome to navigate a racist world between white and black. At the same time, it also brought to light how that division divided African American themselves. Wilson's dominant contemplation in the play of *Fences* community is built around people and there are those who construct, willingly or unwillingly around themselves. This remains his most powerful compose play, not only for the voice it gives to what was encounter by many black lives during a vital decade in American culture but the complicated distress parents and child association. Wilson occupies an unusual position in American theatre. Although he feels very passionate about the historical treatment of Blacks in American society, his characters break through the barriers of race and speak to both white and blacks. According to the article *Breaking Barrier* (Shafer, 1999) indicates, " Wilson devoted himself to helping black people to know their root in order to help them understand themselves, and his plays demonstrate the black struggle to gain this understanding or escape from it (p. 15).

Wilson's drama of *Fences* was first produced in 1985 at the Yale Repertory Theatre. However, the drama of *Fences* is not only foremost because it secured Wilson's presence on the Broadway and Pulitzer award, but also it proved that another African American playwright could meet the challenges and compose a traditional drama. Moreover, the drama also demonstrates the universality of Wilson's Black centered characters and culture. Despite the complication due to racial prejudice that impeded his early life, education, and career, he did not surrender his dream until he was able to accomplish his dream as play writer. He had refused to submit to the temptation of racism. Wilson never let his success alter his work. The impacts of Wilson's works have made a lasting mark on American theatre and opened doors to the conversations about the black experiences in America. Wilson was attracted to the theater and its potential to reach audiences, no matter the class or race. He was a play and novelist writer whose works have created a great impact on people of races in the United States of America. The world had changed dramatically since the drama of *Fences* was first published.

In summary, Wilson wrote plays with purely creative intention, although often his works were politicized. He did not write the drama of *Fences* particularly to effect social change. His work encompasses beyond race and class with the diversity of theme including loyalty, kindness, and dependability, his themes that universally weave in and out of people's daily life. The characters Wilson created from Troy in *Fences* drama offer valuable and crucial roles to the American theatre tradition. Many people around the world have changed the negative perception about the racism of color by watching



the drama of *Fences*. It was fascinating to see the person who had gone through a lot of obstacles to be an outstanding playwright in the history of African American. Millions of people around the globe have been empowered by Wilson's messages from the drama of *Fences* and they realized how powerful the drama is because it teaches people about so many things such as challenges are sometimes a way to success. Wilson has left behind his own record, the largely self-educated author has racked up a rare achievement five plays successfully produced on the Broadway and nationwide, two Pulitzer prizes. Wilson's work has been used as one of the best college literature for teaching students in most of the colleges in the United States of America.

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