



As Long As it Takes: Meeting the Challenge

William Pinkney

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Captain William Bill Pinkney tells us the story that as a young boy growing up in the part of Chicago called Bronzeville, he was made aware of a depressing statistic: Before I would turn 21, the chances were that I would be on drugs, in jail, or dead from crimes of violence. That was because I was a black male, educated in the public school system, raised partially on welfare, and brought up by a divorced woman. Pinkney beat the odds because my mother never believed it - and neither did I. I was taught, and convinced, that I could become whatever I wanted to be if I was willing to work for it. On June 9, 1992, Captain Pinkney sailed his boat, *Commitment*, into Boston Harbor after completing a twenty-two month solo-circumnavigation of the globe. As the first African-American to sail alone via Cape Horn through the dangerous Southern Ocean, the journey was even more special because of the message he set out to send to children about their dreams, education, and, above all, commitment. During his adventure on the high seas - from Boston to Bermuda, Brazil, South Africa, Tasmania, around Cape Horn, Uruguay, and back to Boston - Pinkney communicated with students in Boston and Chicago almost daily via, radio, home video dispatches, and position locations by satellite. His communiqués with students not only taught them sailing basics, geometry, biology, ecology, and geography, but also presented them with valuable life lessons of dedication, perseverance, and survival. The first African-American to solo-circumnavigate the globe via the Southern Capes, including Cape Horn, William Pinkney was born on September 15, 1935, in Chicago. Pinkney joined the Navy after graduating from high school. After the Navy, Pinkney worked as a union make-up artist. He then became a marketing manager for Revlon and went on to be a Public Information Officer for the City of Chicago. Throughout this time, Pinkney's real passion was sailing, and he earned a coveted U.S. Merchant Marine Officer's license. He decided to embark on a solo sail around the world in 1990, which was documented in a Peabody Award winning video narrated by Bill Cosby. Before becoming Master of the Freedom Schooner *Amistad* in 2000, he set out with a crew of teachers to trace the Middle Passage slave routes to the Americas. He has been honored by senators and former presidents, and he had the account of his feat read into the Congressional Record. In addition, Pinkney has been awarded Honorary Doctorates from Southern Connecticut State University and Becker College in Worcester, MA. He is a Trustee of Mystic Seaport the Museum of America and the Sea and a Director of the Ocean Conservancy. He and his wife Migdalia live in Connecticut. *As Long As It Takes* has it going on! It is a travel book of the first order. It is an inspirational book to compare with any on the market today. And finally, and probably at its most charming, it is a delightful autobiography. Maya Angelou _____ *As Long As It Takes* is about life, achievement, and sailing. It is about growing up and finding goals; about staying the course and minding the heading, and about arriving at places one had only dreamed about. This book is about the making of Captain William Bill Pinkney, about his friends and family, and about his boats, Especially, *Comittment*. She took him round the world via the five great capes. He was only the 4th of five Americans, and one of 128 individuals to have done so world wide. Bill Pinkney writes about the love of the sea, life, adventure and his fellow humans with passion and style. William Pinkney was born in Chicago's Bronzeville during the Great depression and after many Middle Passages of his own through school, the Navy, and as a business executive, he left Revlon to sail 27000 miles solo around the world on a 22 month voyage in 1991-92. In 1998 he followed this with a historic voyage to retrace the Middle Passage slave trade route in a five month round-trip sail from the Carribean to the US via Ghana and Senegal. He subsequently became Master of the Freedom Schooner, *Amistad*. _____

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