

Who is Cleo Scott Brown?



Award-Winning Author, Speaker and Race Relations Specialist

Cleo Scott Brown is a woman on a mission. That mission? To use history to generate insightful, meaningful discussions about race relations, voting rights and social class that lead to introspection and change. The founder of the History Matters Institute, Cleo exudes new school wisdom and makes history relevant.

Although oft considered ‘taboo’ topics, Cleo is a dynamic and gifted speaker with the ability to put audiences at ease while leading them to a place of heightened awareness and understanding.

Many Americans lack the historical knowledge of what has transpired between the races over time; therefore, Americans often struggle to relate to one another and to our unique history. To bridge this gap, Cleo uses lessons from history to help connect the past with the present. By linking modern society to the past, she enables her audiences to transform knowledge to understanding which leads to wisdom.

Her History

Cleo is uniquely qualified to speak on race relations, voting rights and social class because of a harrowing yet inspiring upbringing during a time of great social change in the South.

As a young girl, Cleo Scott Brown was riding in her family’s car when it was fired upon at close range. The attack left her father injured, but alive with a strengthened resolve. His crime? Cleo’s father and her family had embarked on a daring and controversial mission: registering and organizing the African American vote in rural Louisiana.

Before Cleo was even a teenager, she had become familiar with the constant barrage of threats, terror, and abuse that came with the fight to secure a fundamental right. Her childhood memories are filled with recollections of burning crosses, threatening phone calls, and each night praying that God would take her into his kingdom if that was the night “they” came to kill her. She was also one of the first youth in her area to participate in a school integration experiment, an experience that proved to be more traumatic than living under the constant threat of the terror in the night.

Despite these experiences, which would leave many jaded, Cleo does not harbor bitterness or resentment—instead choosing to focus on the lessons to be learned from her experiences, the healing power of forgiveness, and the releasing power of truth.

Cleo is the author of *Witness to the Truth* (University of South Carolina Press), an account of her father’s struggle for human rights in the rural south starting in the early 1900s. It has been on Essence.com’s Top 10 non-fiction bestseller list, selected as Ouachita Parish’s (LA) River Read Adult Summer Read selection and earned Cleo an HBO Beah Richards Spirit Award. She also publishes [History Matters Report](#), the monthly publication of History Matters Institute and was a contributor to the **African American National Biography** (Oxford University Press & Harvard University’s W. E. B. Du Bois Institute). Cleo is a top honor graduate of Grambling State University and is a retired Risk Manager for a South Carolina utility.

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Speaker, Author, Race Relations Specialist



Cleo's Topics

Cleo speaks nationally on race relations, black history, voting rights, and class.

Unlike many speakers, Cleo has a personal connection with much of her subject matter. Like her father, the central figure in her book *Witness to the Truth*, Cleo believes that her experiences have been for a greater purpose. Her talent is using history to generate insightful, meaningful discussions about today's race relations, voting rights, and class issues that lead to introspection and change.

Book Cleo

Cleo is available for media interviews as well as key notes, academic lectures, interactive workshops, community and faith-based events, book discussions and other private and public events. Topics include but are not limited to:

- History Matters: Connecting Your Past to Your Present—Understanding underlying reasons for many of today's issues through an exploration of history, with a focus on race, voting rights, and class
- History Matters: Voting Rights & Wrongs—Voting, what it cost, why it matters, and what history should teach us about the seriousness of what is happening today
- History Matters: Whose Report Do You Believe?—Inspirational messages using history to help audiences see beyond and stop internalizing media stereotypes
- History Matters: Think About What You Just Thought—Interactive workshops to help participants become more aware of personal biases

To schedule Cleo, contact her at:

Cleo Scott Brown – Speaker, Author, Race Relations Strategist

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What Others Have to Say

“One faculty member said you were the best [convocation] speaker in the eight years she has been here.” Charleston Southern University

“Your presentation provoked more discussion after the event than most of the programs we have had in the past.” Race Relations Committee, Episcopal Church

“You really opened my eyes.” Student, Southern University, LA

“Very impressed not only with your book, but with your speaking style before groups...you're a super speaker.” Director, LSU

“A spellbinding memoirThis book is so well written...it is difficult to put it down. Its contents also are of major importance...In a simple but profound fashion, Scott explains the rationale behind segregation and its psychological effects on whites and blacks, which is a key factor in understanding today's racial problems.” Charleston Post & Courier



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History Matters Institute

Knowledge ▶ Understanding ▶ Wisdom