

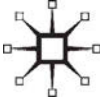
APARTHEID ON A BLACK ISLE

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APARTHEID ON A BLACK ISLE
REMOVAL AND RESISTANCE IN ALEXANDRA,
SOUTH AFRICA

Dawne Y. Curry

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This book is dedicated to my mother, Ronnie, who taught me my first lessons on resistance.

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This intellectual journey would not have been possible without my mother's love and encouragement. My mother's support was duly noted on numerous occasions, but especially when I told her that my picture with Nelson Mandela would proudly be displayed on the wall in between Martin Luther King, Jr. and the South African leader. She didn't even bat an eye, and said, "I'm sure it will." At the time I hadn't stepped foot in South Africa nor had I finished my doctoral program, but that didn't stop my mother from believing in me. Strangely enough, however, when that moment came on two occasions, I decided not to have the photo taken. I wanted the encounters to remain forever etched in my mind rather than produced as photographic images. It took me five years to accomplish that goal, as I had begun my explorations to South Africa in 1997. Under a fellowship from the Social Science Research Council (SRC) and the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), I tested the feasibility of my dissertation project. During that fellowship tenure I lived in South Africa for a year, and experienced Johannesburg's pulse, culture, and vibe. That stay began my lifelong love with the country and its diverse peoples and landscapes. I thank the SRC and the ACLS for giving me this opportunity to get my feet wet.

Other funders are due their acknowledgments. Several grants from Michigan State University (MSU) further afforded me trips to South Africa. A year-long Fulbright Hays fellowship sponsored by the United States Department of Education also provided me with the monetary and psychic space to conduct archival research and to record over a hundred interviews, many of which appear in this book. I also would like to thank the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) for supporting my research as a junior faculty member. All of these opportunities would not have been possible without the encouragement of my former advisor, who had me writing grant proposals during my second week at MSU. My colleagues and I all sat around a table at a coffee shop every week and constructively critiqued each other's work. That was a rewarding experience, and I thank you. My

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Family members also deserve their due. Momma Claudine and Daddy James were my "grandparents." I always checked on them whenever I was going to "town" and would often sit and chat. One time I interviewed Momma Claudine about her life as a midwife. I will never forget the story she told me about a mother who asked if her child was ugly. Momma Claudine said, "I tell you what, if its ugly I'll

take it home and when it gets good looking I'll bring it back to you." Thanks Momma Claudine for being my grandmother, for your quick wit, and for attending my college graduation. Daddy James, thanks for slipping me that twenty dollar bill, when I was struggling, and for our talk about your first plane ride to Atlanta at the age of 90. I bet, you and Momma Claudine are both flying now. Their offspring Shirley Dunaway, Jeanette Cottrell, Maxine Carter, Denise Mazyck and Vanessa "Tinsey" Pope have each offered undying support and love by feeding me during Christmas breaks, by attending my doctoral graduation, and by just simply having their doors open when I came to Virginia to visit. I love listening to your stories about the past. Sometimes my sides never stopped hurting from all the laughter. My adopted "father and mother" Gus and Louise (Weazie) Dunaway never stopped loving me even when years past between us. Thank you all for that Virginia Northern Neck hospitality.

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These "accolades" would not have been possible had my mother not instilled the value of an education. Every day when I came home

from school, I took my clothes off and did my homework at the kitchen table. Momma spent numerous hours with me going over vocabulary and math. She would always say “I don’t know why they teach y’all all these new fangled methods. I learned this way.” Her way, I must admit was a lot easier. I respected all the advice my mother gave me about school, until she suggested that I take typing in the tenth grade. I had no desire to learn this skill, in fact, I flunked several typing drills and even threw the evidence of my failures in numerous trashcans. Practicing at home on my pica typewriter didn’t help matters either until one day I decided that I was going to conquer typing. Instead of dreading the class, I began to listen intently to my teacher Mrs. Francine Waddy’s instructions, “feet flat, one foot slightly forward, eyes on copy, begin,” and off I would go to improve my typing speed. I think that at one time I got up to 60 words per minute with one or two typing errors. While it may have taken me to my college years to understand the value of this course, my momma always knew, and because of her and Mrs. Waddy I have an invaluable skill. No matter how many degrees I hold, I am still in awe and inspired by Momma who remains my mentor, friend, and confidant. Thank you Momma for your intellect, sense of humor, and candor.