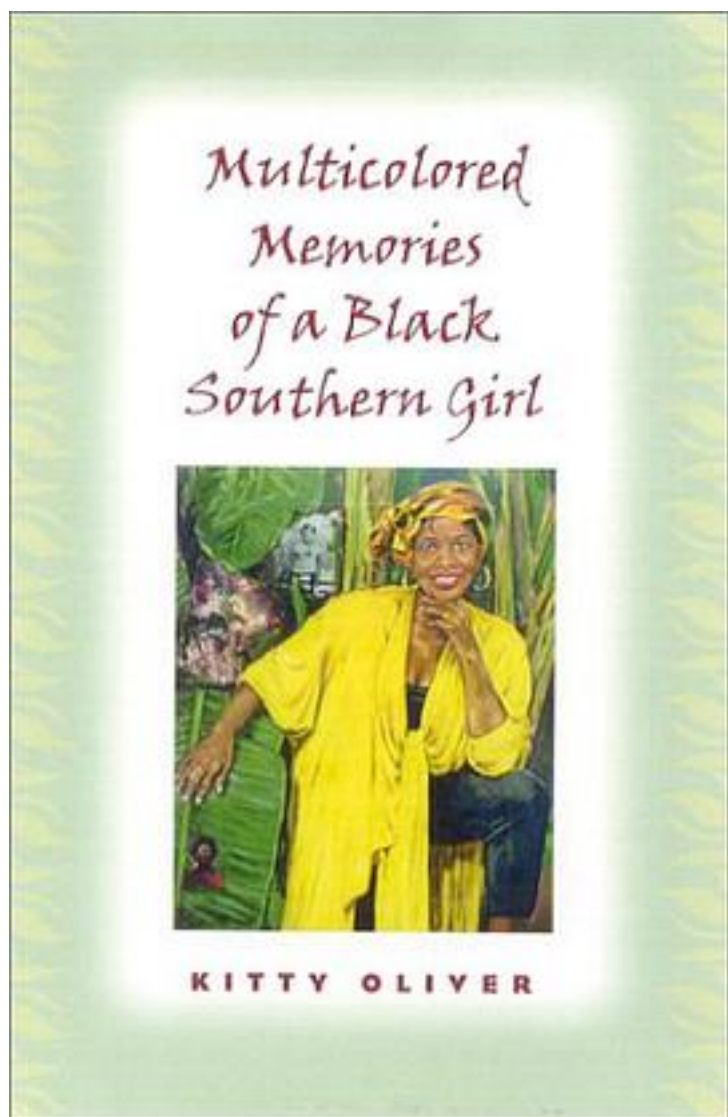


Multicolored Memories of a Black Southern Girl



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From Publishers Weekly "We piece together a life of meeting people, going places, collecting stories," says Oliver, a journalist and writer in residence at Florida Atlantic University, but the pieces don't quite gel in this lifeless account of one of the first African-American freshmen to integrate the University of Florida in 1965. Her experiences intrigue (her father was fired from his job at a local restaurant after she participated in a civil rights demonstration, and she adopted a biracial child), but her book is pedestrian. Part autobiography (marred by an overabundance of "I," even for this genre), part account of a generation (dulled by an arguably editorial "we") and part meandering memoir, it leaves the reader with a confusing mélange of personal history and impersonal generalities. Autobiographical detail is lacking e.g., her husband and children receive short shrift and authority is scant for broad observations about her generation. Stories that might pass muster at family gatherings (getting lost in a store, one's first cup of cappuccino) wilt between book covers. The memoir reads like discreet essays that simply fail to cohere, and the chronology is equally disordered. Such work is sometimes redeemed by elegance and grace, but no such luck here: the style is flavorless. (Oct.) Forecast: This is far from Anne Moody's *Coming of Age* and Lorene Cary's *Black Ice*. Women's studies groups will pick it up, and black readers who came of age in the '60s may identify, but nothing else will push sales much. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Oliver (Voices of America), who worked for the Miami Herald for 19 years and is now writer-in-residence at Florida Atlantic University, was one of the first African American freshmen to integrate the University of Florida in 1965. In this beautifully written memoir, she tells the story of her school experiences, her search for her roots, and her marriage and eventual divorce. She also discusses the fears she used to have about the white community and how she went beyond the stereotypes imposed on her as a child to come to terms with living an integrated life in the United States. The only downside to her account is that she tends to bounce back and forth so much that it is sometimes difficult to follow the story. Still, this unique blend of autobiography and travelog is filled with rich prose that will keep many readers' interest. For all academic libraries with Southern or racial studies collections. Danna Bell-Russel, Library of Congress Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. See all Editorial Reviews

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