

## WME AUTHOR WINS DIVERSITY AWARD

**Author of the Inspirational Story: *God Spare Life*, Honored with Diversity Award**

**ROCHESTER, NY (April 14, 2008):** Dr. Claudia Thomas, the first African American female orthopaedic surgeon in the U.S., was honored this month by her peers at the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. In an award ceremony held in San Francisco at the 75<sup>th</sup> Annual AAOS Meeting, Dr. Thomas received the 2008 Diversity Award for her “preeminent role ... in the black community and also in the field of orthopaedics.”

“Dr. Thomas, the first black female orthopaedic surgeon in her field, has worked throughout her residency and practice to recruit and retain individuals who are underrepresented in the field of orthopaedic surgery,” so says the press release from the AAOS. They also note that in addition to maintaining her medical practice in her home state of Florida, Dr. Thomas, along with other physicians in the area, reach out to their local middle schools to build relationships with the students, demonstrating the opportunities available through education and perseverance.

WME Books is very proud to count Dr. Thomas as one of our authors. Her story, told in the pages of *God Spare Life*, resonates on page after page with a focus on family, faith and education. “My parents prepared me to be where I am,” she says. Her mother and father, though not as educated as she would become, were both smart and loving. They gave her the twin values of learning to excel in school and to acknowledge her faith as a vital part of her life. *God Spare Life* is a moving story of that life, flowing from her a childhood and young adult life in Queens, NY, all the way through the rough and, sometimes, exhilarating experiences that challenged her very core as an adult intent upon becoming an orthopaedic surgeon. Through it all, Dr. Thomas reveals how much her faith sustained her when her medical training could not.

She describes her life as three storms: first riding out the squalls of coming of age as one of the first black students at Vassar College in the 1960s; second, trapped in the jaws of a demonic hurricane – where she prayed over and over, “God Spare Life;” and the third as a patient stricken with kidney cancer, cared for by a devoted mother and saved by a loving sister’s donation of a kidney. To move beyond all that and be honored with the respect of being the 2008 recipient of the AAOS Diversity Award, is testament to Dr. Thomas’s strength of character and her devotion to faith.

We celebrate Women’s History Month because of women like Dr. Thomas. Her story proves that strong women of faith can, indeed, move mountains. It’s a story meant for all women and girls. Dr. Claudia Thomas continues to inspire everyone she meets, from all walks of life. She encourages all people, men and women, girls and boys, black and white, to strive for achievement, through faith and education. We invite you to visit Dr. Thomas’s website and blog at <http://claudiathomas.typepad.com> for more information on her incredible story.