



BEST BOOKS *of Indiana*

2011 WINNER
FOR CHILDREN/YA

Sources of Light
Margaret McMullan

Struggling with her own personal challenges, including the recent death of her soldier father in Vietnam and a new home and school as she and her mother, a college art history professor, have just moved to Montgomery, Alabama, in 1962....fourteen year old Sam is initially unaware of the racial tensions around her. As she begins to experience first-hand, however, the escalating emotions of the civil rights movement in Montgomery, Sam is torn between the desire to “live her life staying out of the way” and fulfilling the wishes of her father whose mantra to her was to “always do the right thing.” Clarity begins to come to her in the person of Perry Walker, her mother’s new photographer boyfriend, through his words, actions, and a gift of a camera. Sam captures in “snapshots” lunch counter sit-ins, voter registrations, divisive confrontations, and the various facial expressions of those around her. As she watches and listens to her mother, Perry, other adults, and her peers, Sam begins to discern right from wrong, darkness from light. These themes and the symbolism of the camera ring true through McMullan’s powerful and oftentimes lyrical storytelling. The voices of the characters, both major and minor, resonate in their thoughts, opinions, doubts, and convictions of 50 years ago through the pages of this book. Strong social studies curriculum connections can be made from *Sources of Light*, pair with National Book Award winner and Newbery Honor Book Claudette Colvin: *Twice Toward Justice* (Hoose), or historical fiction novels, *My Mother the Cheerleader* (Sharenow), *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* (Curtis), or *A Thousand Never Evers* (Bang).