

*From My Culture to the Mainstream...and Back Again*  
Author: Robert E. Bridges  
*An Autobiography*

In his book *From My Culture to the Mainstream...and Back Again*, Bob Bridges describes the first 75 years of his life from forming an identity in poor, rural and segregated North Carolina to becoming a respected educator responsible for running a large integrated school district.

As he grew older and came to understand personal and professional success, he quickly appreciated how much of his own progress was built upon an ability to move comfortably between the cultures and communities of both blacks and whites. Without the ability to be “bi-cultural,” as he describes it, his options would be limited.

His personal story is intertwined with details and insights about key administrative decisions of the 1970s and 1980s. Those decisions are critical to understanding how the district operates today.

But ultimately the book is about Bridges’ personal understanding of the interplay among race, education and forming one’s view of the world.

“Who we are, how we came to be, and what we do with our lives, cannot always be predicted by the advantages or disadvantages that greet us at birth,” Bridges writes near end of the book.

“The odds favor those born to privilege or at least with a positively contributing set of surrounding circumstances. However, the developmental process tends to be dynamic and uncertain enough to allow for surprising outcomes.”