

**Toni Simmons**  
**Storyteller**

Toni Simmons, author and storyteller, graduated from Fisk University, where she majored in speech and drama. After receiving a Master's degree in Library Science, she began working as a children's librarian combining her knowledge of children's literature and creative drama in storytelling sessions. She continued this activity while working for public libraries in Miami, Florida, Des Moines, Iowa, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Cedar Hill, Texas. As a professional storyteller, she brings to the stories, new life with the use of rhythms, songs, and audience participation, which places them in the story. Her work appeals to audiences of all ages, young and old, and includes a wide variety of literature from different cultures.



Toni has conducted storytelling, creative dramatic and movement workshops in schools, community centers, and theaters, and has worked with teachers helping them to incorporate the arts into their curricula. Toni served as a Storyteller in Residence for the Ouachita Parish and Monroe City Schools in Northeast Louisiana and taught drama at The Hockaday School in Dallas, Texas.

She has been featured at the Corn Island Storytelling Festival in Kentucky; the National Black Storytelling Festival, the Strawberry Festival in Hammond, LA; the Border Book Festival in Las Cruces, NM; the Haunting in the Hills Storytelling Festival, Knoxville, TN; the Signifying and Testifying Storytelling Festival in Minneapolis, MN; Texas Storytelling Festival and the Miami Book Fair International (FL).

Toni was designated as a National Endowment for the Arts American Masterpiece touring artist. She is also a Texas Commission on the Arts Touring Artist. She has appeared on the Good Morning Texas TV show, at the Texas Library Association Convention, the American Library Association Convention in New Orleans, LA, and at the Exchange Place of the International Storytelling Festival. Her talents have reached audiences in schools, museums, theaters, and libraries across the US, and in Germany, South Africa, Mexico and the Bahamas.

The Cheese Chase: Why Dogs Chase Cats, an I-Parenting Media Award winner, is Toni's first book. Her video recording, Stories Alive: African and African-American Folktales won the Parents' Choice and Parent Council Awards.

Toni now also serves as director of the Zula B. Wylie Public Library in Cedar Hill, Texas.