

# KIRKUS

---

# REVIEWS

## TITLE INFORMATION

### **UNMASKING: A WOMAN'S JOURNEY**

*A Memoir of Courage, Hope, Forgiveness, And Healing*

Lockhart, Gloria Ewing

Gloria Lockhart (260 pp.)

\$15.00 paperback, \$7.12 e-book

ISBN: 978-0985881801; December 7, 2012

## BOOK REVIEW

In her debut memoir, an African-American woman tells the story of how she became an advocate for social change.

The book begins with a moving prologue in which Lockhart tells of counseling high-risk teenage girls, setting the stage for the author's story of discrimination, self-hatred, personal growth and self-acceptance. Lockhart was born in Eudora, Ark., and at age 5, after her parents' divorce, she moved to Mt. Pleasant, Tenn. Her mother, Thelma, who dreamed of becoming a New York model, sent the author to Lansing, Mich., to live with her aunt and uncle, with the understanding she could return when her mother had a career and steady income. While living with the Ewings, Lockhart was sexually abused by her uncle starting at age 8; her trust faltered and she shut herself off from others. Growing up in the turbulent 1960s during the civil-rights movement, the author experienced athletic and academic success and, because she was light-skinned, prejudice from both whites and blacks. In time, her dreams of becoming an Olympic athlete were supplanted by a career in social service, although she earned money in other ways, including cleaning houses and even writing speeches for baseball superstar Hank Aaron. Her minister husband, whom she later divorced, was abusive and irresponsible; the book insightfully explores how a woman of beauty, intelligence and determination can end up in such an oppressive marriage. The narrative, although well written, occasionally lags, but celebrity references (in addition to Aaron, she was acquainted with the singer Marvin Gaye and civil-rights pioneer Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, among others) pick up the pace, as does a stirring account of Lockhart's climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro. Readers may find some points contentious; for example, during the author's account of her career in social services, she faults the white power structure for the sad state of the "system" in Michigan, although both the administrator who hired her and her supervisor were African-American. Overall, however, the book is a redemptive tale of confronting challenges and finding the courage to forgive and move on.

Honest, well-intentioned personal history.