

[Unflappable Spotlights an Indiana Heroine and the Business of Managing Life](#)

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Making the best decisions in your field can always be enhanced by the wisdom of mentors. But what if your mentors slip away one by one along your professional journey? Any hero would buckle if such a challenge was encountered continuously. That happened for executive Carolyn E. Mosby-Williams, and is detailed in her autobiography [Unflappable](#). It was written with Lisa DeNeal, a veteran journalist and correspondent at the *Post-Tribune* in Gary, Indiana.

You may not have heard of Carolyn Mosby-Williams (who has begun going by Carolyn E. Mosby since the book's publication), but if you're a Hoosier you certainly know her mother, the late Indiana Senator Carolyn Brown Mosby. Sen. Mosby fought for the economic vitality of Gary, Indiana, which has seen hard times. Her last major act was the passage of a referendum that permitted casinos in Indiana.

Mosby-Williams shares a series of personal losses – the cancerous tumor that hindered her mother; the prostate cancer of her mentor, Indiana Black Expo president Rev. Charles Williams; and the coma of a boyfriend suffering from Hodgkin's Lymphoma. The book delves into Mosby-Williams' management of her life and how she grew from the trials.

I purchased a copy after [connecting with the author on Facebook](#) and to support a Gary native who happened to graduate from my high school. Mosby-Williams, who now lives in Indianapolis, was a board member of the Indiana Black Expo, one of the largest black business trade shows in the country. She was recently appointed president and CEO of the Indiana Minority Supplier Development Council. While the book focuses on Mosby-Williams' tribute to her mother and her own growth, hints of Northwest Indiana and black history are infused in the story as well, showcasing how a memoir can inform the reader.

Where a Fighter's Spirit Comes From

The book introduces the reader to the Mosby family. John Oliver Mosby, retired from his own janitorial contract business, raised his daughter with a “whimsical approach to life...He was not lazy...He just had a contented aura of peace and leisure about him.” But it was following Sen.

Carolyn Mosby, born in Nashville but raised in Gary, that gave Mosby-Williams the budding communication and media skills learned from helping her mother with her first campaign.

The elder Carolyn also gave her daughter wonderful exposure to thoughtful people, such as the faculty at the University of Chicago “*who were noted intellectuals in American history....including Milton Friedman, who won the Nobel prize in economic science...[and novelist] Saul Bellow....*” For Mosby-Williams, the Senator became “*the master craftsman that constructed my foundation.*” Mosby-Williams would later establish her own introductions, having worked with notable actors, celebrities and professionals.

Readers familiar with Indiana will quickly identify local nuances as *Unflappable* deftly weaves much of the last 40 years of the state’s history with Carolyn’s coming of age. You’ll read about the abandonment of downtown Gary due to racial tensions, and local institutions such as radio station WLTH.

The casino legislation was a hallmark for Sen. Mosby. East Chicago and Hammond opened casinos soon after the first two casinos opened in Gary. Opposition existed, as a family friend, a leader at a popular church, demonstrated against the bill. If you are a reader from an economically overlooked community, you’ll relate to the struggle Sen. Mosby led to develop an opportunity. The struggle is made more poignant as Sen. Mosby discovered her tumor at the time the legislation passed.

How a Business Rose Remains a Rose by Any Other Name

While some books like [Guitar Lessons \(see the review\)](#) incorporate industry insights, *Unflappable* uniquely unveils Mosby-Williams’ professional insights through her personal relationships, much like author Atul Gawande’s medical perspective of the checklist in [The Checklist Manifesto \(see the review\)](#). Below, Mosby-Williams explains how her professional life in communications and media intertwines with her personal choices.

“If you dated me, you were also dating my career and IBE. You were immediately thrown into the craziness of Expo and all that it entailed....People who are not in communications or in the media do not understand the hours of work required to make sure [attendees] have a great time...Not maintaining a cooperative, businesslike and cordial relationship with the media can result in major scrutiny if something problematic happens.”

Reveals like this can connect to young professionals who see media opportunities but are also unaware of a business’s potential impact on a personal life. Mosby-Williams keeps it real about her personal trials, but never descends to the paparazzi-tell-it-on-TMZ level. She mentions some of her youthful indulgences, but she does so to show that these episodes don’t have to overwhelm a work ethic, one which now finds her up at 4 or 5 in the morning: “***Any of my friends would tell you that while they are asleep, I am already in the middle of the schedule for the day.***”

Unflappable offers distinctive wisdom for young entrepreneurs and professionals who are in the midst of personal decisions and need to see how a leader considers her choices. There are no

how-to processes like the one [Living a Richer Life](#) offers. Instead, the book complements such approaches by offering poignant insights like the women featured in [Jewels \(see the review\)](#).

Mosby-Williams writes with the savvy that one would expect from a professional who successfully led PR assignments for corporations, a political campaign and a major expo before reaching the age of 30. She also displays how much family can influence your leadership with mentions of her grandmother, part of the inspiration for the name of her PR firm.

Aretha Franklin once sang a song of inner strength and beauty called *A Rose Is Still a Rose*. When one considers their own “inner rose,” sometimes one needs to know the realities of the care required to make that rose bloom. If you know a young adult trying to cope with a life challenge or in reflection, you may want to give them *Unflappable*. It’s a beacon of where their lives can take them—with the right balance.

About the Author



Pierre DeBois is the founder of [Zimana](#), a consultancy providing strategic analysis to small and medium sized businesses that rely on web analytics data. A Gary, Indiana native, Pierre is currently based in Brooklyn. He blogs about marketing, finance, social media, and analytics at [Zimana blog](#).