



## Audio Transcript: Rossetta's Story

3, 2, 1, welcome to Ex Fabula! True, Personal Stories. Ex Fabula! Story, Stage, You. Ex Fabula is a Milwaukee non-profit committed to strengthening community bonds through the art of storytelling.

Ex Fabula Fellows are community members who use personal stories to inspire community led dialogue around some of the most pressing issues in the greater Milwaukee area like segregation, and economic and racial inequality.

Ex Fabula Fellow Rossetta Hall shared a story at the Zeidler Center in November of 2015.

Thank you. Thank you, hello. I'm Rossetta and first I'm going to give you a little fo my background. I was raised in foster homes. I'm a single mom; my mother was a single mom. So, my story reflects that and why I tried so hard. In 1989 I started working for the New York State unified court system. During that time there was only a handful of African Americans at the courthouse. So, um, I felt that privilege to actually work there because there were only so many African Americans. Also, I learned everything within that time frame. I learned how to be a court clerk. I learned how to be a cashier, a small claims clerk. I learned how to do mental health. I was a special court clerk, drug clerk. I worked in many different fields in the court system. I was a backup, I was a trainer. During all that time I thought that I was proving something that I wanted to make this a career for me.

However at one point I went into my supervisor and I said, "I would like to go to school full time but I need your help. I need to be able to at least work through lunch hour and get off about an hour early". At that very moment she tells me, "You know, that would be hard for a person, a single mother, with five children". I felt really disappointed like, I really wanna do this, you know, I really wanna go back to school because I need this for my children. I need to be able to raise them in a great environment or a better environment. She said that they couldn't help me; they would not be able to accommodate me going to school or working through my lunch hours. So I left out of her office, I was disappointed, frustrated, but at the same time I was still determined and push on through and make it a good start for me and my kids no matter what the supervisor said.

But during that time, um, I stayed there for 16 years and I stayed there without an education. I only moved in the direction that I was allowed to move in which was taking civil service tests. Passing at the highest with the third highest with the ranking in the test result. So I did improve, I moved, I promoted four times. Three times permanent, once temporary and the temporary job was a court clerk job. I really wanted to do it because I had been training. I had been doing the job; I trained other people in the job. They took that court job away from me and gave it to someone else, a, um, white clerk. So that was fine, I still prevailed and I kept on going. I guess the most disappointing portion of all of that was that I was able to witness another female, a white female, at my



job sitting at her computer desk doing her homework, going to school full time. That was very, very much disappointing.

But, that did not stop me but it is a point that I have to make that it really hurt me to know that she was able to go to school and I was not able to. But I did go back to school. I have a bachelor's degree in business so I did make it after all. I moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, about ten years ago. I started working in the Milwaukee county court systems. I also worked there for four years, learned every single court. And I promoted to the Wisconsin Supreme Court, court of appeals. That's where I am now and I am still studying and learning. Thank you.

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