



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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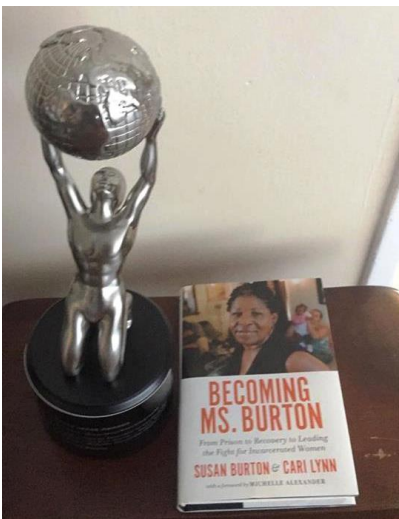
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## "BECOMING MS. BURTON" WON 2018's NAACP IMAGE AWARD

### FOR OUTSTANDING LITERARY WORK (BIOGRAPHY/AUTOBIOGRAPHY)

LOS ANGELES (January 17, 2018) – During a January 14<sup>th</sup> ceremony, Susan Burton's memoir [\*\*BECOMING MS. BURTON\*\*](#) received a [\*\*2018 NAACP Image Award\*\*](#) for Outstanding Literary Work in the category of Biography/Autobiography. "I'm honored to be recognized for my life story," Burton said in acceptance of the award. "I think about Rosa Parks. She took us from the back of the bus. And now, Black women are at the front of the prison. I wonder...how will we get them out of the front of that prison? That's my work."



According to a [\*\*2016 Vera Institute of Justice Study\*\*](#), women are the fastest growing incarcerated population. **From the study's Fact Sheet:**

*"Available research to help explain why women are increasingly incarcerated in U.S. jails is scarce, dated, and limited in scope. Nevertheless, general data about women in the criminal justice system provides clues about who these women are, and why they end up in jail. Like men in jail, they are disproportionately people of color, overwhelmingly poor and low-income, survivors of violence and trauma, and have high rates of physical and mental illness and substance use. The majority are charged with lower-level offenses—mostly property and drug-related—and tend to have less extensive criminal histories than their male counterparts. Unlike incarcerated men, women in jails are often primary caregivers to their young children—nearly 80 percent of women in jails are mothers, and most are single parents."*

Burton is troubled with the increasing over-incarceration of women and vows to continue her advocacy on their behalf. Her current passion and project is to place BECOMING MS. BURTON into the hands of thousands of people in prisons across the United States, acting as a beacon of hope to those in desperate need.

Burton's non-profit A New Way of Life (ANWOL) and her publisher The New Press have received major philanthropic support to print 11,000 paperback copies of BECOMING MS. BURTON, featuring new material by Burton, which will be made available exclusively through prisons, reentry programs, and other criminal justice reform organizations free of charge by The New Press. The books are now available with the goal to distribute copies of the paperback edition in all fifty states. Whenever possible, Susan Burton will visit prisons in connection with the distribution of the books.

Nicholas Kristof in *The New York Times* called the book "a stunning memoir" and describes Burton as "a modern-day Harriet Tubman." BECOMING MS. BURTON tells Susan Burton's story of growing up in Los Angeles as the victim of sexual abuse and rape and of her descent into drug and alcohol addiction as she self-medicated, following the death of her five-year-old son. Burton was incarcerated off and on for almost two decades, until she was finally able to enroll herself in a drug treatment program and get the help she needed to heal and stay clean. Since that last release, she has been a tireless advocate for the rights of former prisoners. Her program at ANWOL has helped more than one thousand women break the cycle of mass incarceration, access opportunities and start their lives fresh after leaving prison.

In November of 2017, BECOMING MS. BURTON was awarded the inaugural Goddard Riverside Stephan Russo Book Prize for Social Justice. Burton is also a Starbucks® "Upstander," a CNN Top 10 Hero, a Soros Justice Fellow, a Policy Fellow with the Women's Foundation of California, and a Violence Prevention Fellow with the California Wellness Foundation.

"We are so proud to have published this stunning memoir and manifesto," said The New Press Publisher Ellen Adler. "Susan's story not only has the power to inspire and change lives, it is also helping to inspire real policy reform. We are so fortunate to have the opportunity to publish a special paperback edition so swiftly after the hardcover was released, and to get it in the hands of incarcerated people – some of the readers who will appreciate it most."

"Susan Burton is an angel among us. Her journey is a story of courage, compassion, and conviction. At turns harrowing and inspiring, *Becoming Ms. Burton* provides a valuable new perspective on the consequences of mass incarceration."

—Howard Schultz, executive chairman, Starbucks Coffee Company

"Susan Burton's life and work are a testament to the power of second chances and the impact one person can have on the lives of others. Her book is a stirring and moving tour-de-force—a beautiful inspiration for all of us to continue to fight for justice."

—John Legend, actor, singer, and songwriter

This project has been made possible through generous philanthropic support from the Ford Foundation; the Race, Gender and Human Rights Fund of the Women's Foundation of California; The California Endowment; and other organizations with the goal of furthering advocacy and reform efforts to end mass incarceration, and amplifying the voices of those with direct experience in the criminal justice system.

Any institutions interested in receiving the special prison edition of BECOMING MS. BURTON can contact Marissa Wells at [marissa@anewwayoflife.org](mailto:marissa@anewwayoflife.org).

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### About A New Way of Life

In 1998, Susan Burton founded [A New Way of Life Re-Entry Project \(ANWOL\)](#) dedicated to helping women, families, and communities break the cycle and heal from the formidable experiences of incarceration. ANWOL advances multi-dimensional solutions to the effects of incarceration, including (1) providing housing and support to formerly incarcerated women for successful community re-entry, family reunification, and individual healing; (2) working to restore the civil rights of formerly incarcerated people; and (3) empowering, organizing, and mobilizing formerly incarcerated people as advocates for social change and personal transformation.

A New Way of Life envisions a world where every person can make decisions for his/her own life, is accountable for those decisions, and is valued as a contributing member of the community. ANWOL has been a driving force in considerable policy reforms, including the ban-the-box ordinances and the Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act (Proposition 47), a historic measure to reverse decades of antiquated approaches to community safety and justice, properly redirecting costly prison construction and management resources to education, re-entry, and victims' services.

### About The New Press

For twenty-five years, [The New Press](#), a nonprofit publisher in the public interest, has been committed to publishing books that promote and enrich public discussion and understanding of issues vital to our democracy and to a more equitable world. Like PBS and NPR as they were originally conceived, The New Press aims to provide ideas and viewpoints under-represented in the mass media, and is committed to using its books as "next level advocacy tools" to leverage social change. The New Press is invested in finding visionary writers who have the potential to influence and shape national policy conversations.

The New Press is also dedicated to using its books to leverage social change and frequently partners with social justice and cultural organizations to bring the work of its authors to a broad, national audience.