



Student Perspective

This Year's MCW Common Read and How You Can Participate

by Erica Engstrand – MCW–Milwaukee Medical Student

As a kid, I started reading books because my father liked reading books. Of course, a 7-year-old girl's favorite genre differs greatly than that of a 40-something-year-old man's, but despite our ages we could talk endlessly about the tragedies and triumphs of Harry Potter's quest to find the Sorcerer's Stone. To this day, my dad maintains that Tolkien's "The Hobbit" is a bit of a bore compared to his others and Conrad's "Heart of Darkness" was an amazing story, but I respectfully disagree on both accounts.

My father and I share many common interests besides books, medicine being one of them (he's a general surgeon in the area), but books may as well have been the gateway to our friendship. Stories often do have a way of transcending age, gender, or race—allowing us to be whomever it is we want to be. It is in those moments where a reader is let into someone else's world, that we begin to see and understand a version of someone else's reality. It is for this reason and more, that the MCW Common Read is so indispensable to our community at this time.

The year 2020 has truly proven to disconnect us in more ways than one. If the purpose of the MCW Common Read has always been to connect one another, how could we not address the issues our community is facing? This year, the book selection committee chose *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi because it asks classmates, colleagues, friends, and strangers to relate to one another on a topic often unspoken. We are challenging each other to connect with one another, to "meet" each other wherever we may be in life, and to inspire one another.

Please check out all the ways you can be involved in this year's MCW Common Read, listed below.

Erica is a second-year medical student from Elm Grove, WI who is passionate about health care policy, public health, and MCW's community engagement. She holds positions within Student Surgical Society, AMA-Medical Student Section, Saturday Clinic for the Uninsured, and is an active member on the MCW Common Read Book Selection Committee.

How to Participate in the MCW Common Read

We are extremely moved by the overwhelming interest shown in our program and, in particular, this year's Common Read *How to Be an Antiracist* by Dr. Ibram X. Kendi. It is a true testament to your devotion to racial equity and determination to make the MCW community a safer and more inclusive place for all. We understand that many of you are eager to get involved, so we have outlined some ways that you can participate below:

How to Get a Copy of the Book

- All first-year Medical, Graduate, Pharmacy and Masters Students should have received a free copy of the Common Read, donated by the Dean, School of Medicine's Office.
- Copies are also available through the following venues:
 - **Borrow** a copy from the MCW Library
 - **Purchase** a copy from a local Black-owned books store
 - [Niche Book Bar](#) – Milwaukee, WI
 - [Source Booksellers](#) – Detroit, MI
 - [Detroit Book City Bookstore](#) – Detroit, IL
 - [AfriWare Books](#) – Chicago, IL
 - [Da Book Joint](#) – Chicago, IL
- Interested in buying in bulk for your department? Email commonread@mcw.edu for the publisher's bulk purchasing form.

Upcoming Events

- **Book Discussion #2 | Thursday, Nov. 19 – noon–1 p.m. via Zoom**
 - Join us for another highly anticipated discussion for *How to Be an Antiracist* moderated by Dr. Joseph Kerschner, Dean of the School of Medicine and Executive Vice President of MCW, and Dr. Greer Jordan, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and Assistant Professor. Please note that you do not need to have read the book to participate!
- **Twitter Book Club | Ongoing!**
 - Follow us on Twitter @MCWREADS for once-weekly prompts posted on Thursdays from **October 1 – December 17**
 - Twitter book club is *asynchronous*, so hop on whenever to chime in!

Interested in Hosting a Book Discussion?

If you or your department are interested in hosting a book discussion but don't know where to start, please see our [Common Read website](#) for a discussion guide for facilitators and list of potential questions. Given the limitations due to COVID-19, discussions are currently being held virtually via Zoom (or other web conferencing program).

Stay Connected

- **Social Media**
 - Follow @MCWREADS on Instagram and Twitter for the latest updates, giveaways, and opportunities to participate in ongoing virtual discussions.
 - Don't forget to tag us in your posts (we love to re-share!) and use the hashtags #MCWReads and #MCWxKendi
- **Email List**
 - Subscribe to our mailing list on the [Common Read website](#) so you never miss a beat!

For any additional questions, please email commonread@mcw.edu.

Happy reading! The Common Read Leadership Team.