

AIME ALLEY CARD

# THE Tigerbelles

OLYMPIC LEGENDS  
FROM TENNESSEE  
STATE



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*Author*

## MEDIA KIT – THE TIGERBELLES

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# THE TIGERBELLES

*Olympic Legends  
From Tennessee State*

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# THE Tigerbelles

**OLYMPIC LEGENDS  
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About the  
Tigerbelles

Despite battling Jim Crow laws, racism, poverty, and sexism, one women's track team, the Tigerbelles, overcame nearly insurmountable hurdles - literal and metaphorical - to become celebrated the world over and changed the face of women's sports forever. The Tigerbelles tells the story of their historical performance at the 1960 Olympics in Rome.

# Overview OF THE TIGERBELLES

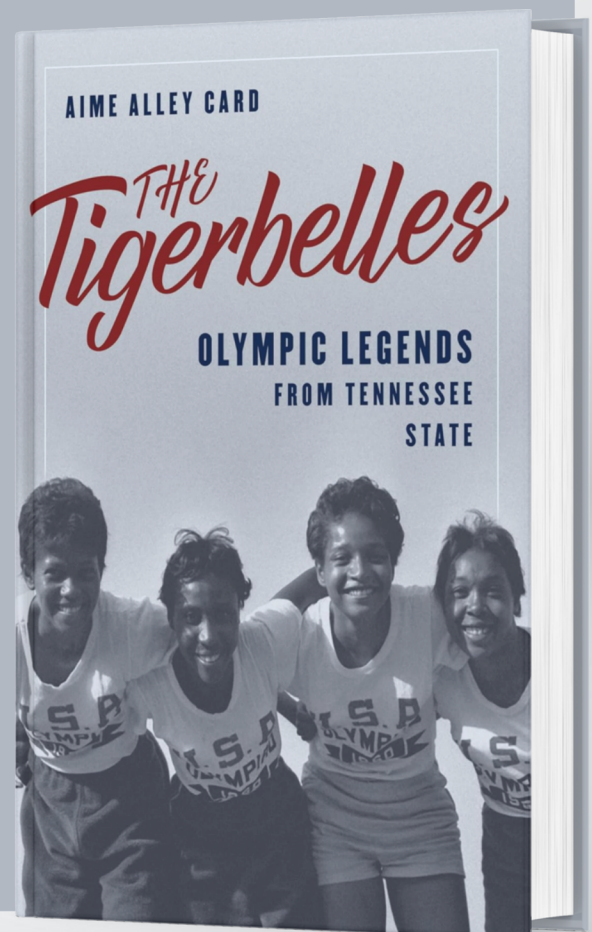
*"How much pride does it take? Enough to sacrifice. You've got to hurt. This means that when you can't possibly run any further, you reach back, get something else, and keep on going. When the average person feels like she can't keep going, she stops. 'I'm tired' is not the time to stop— it's the time to push. Giving all isn't enough— you must learn to give just a little bit more." Coach Edward Temple*

Operating on a shoestring budget and a pitted dirt track, the Tennessee State University Tigerbelles dream of heading to Rome for the 1960 Olympics. It would be a long journey from Nashville, Tennessee to Europe, the first time any of them has travelled so far from their hometown. The diva, the leader, the rebel, the faithful, the innocent, the coach, and the den mother all share a common goal: to represent the USA in Track and Field. As an all-Black team with a Black coach, this dream will be even harder—if not downright impossible—to bring to fruition.

Through a collection of stories, direct quotations, and event descriptions gathered from a vast array of personal interviews, private archives, and out of print personal narratives, The Tigerbelles curates a selection of media presenting the true story in an entirely new and modern framework. This allows readers to witness the events that took place in the context of their time, but also in the context of the lives we have lived since then, showcasing the legacy the Tigerbelles have left behind and the impact they made on our lives today.

My intention is to tell an epic story of desire, success and failure—of beating the odds—against the backdrop of a changing America, but to tell it in an intimate way. Readers will come to know the individuals' unique struggles and triumphs, while also understanding how these dreams emerged and solidified just as the country was struggling to leave the Jim Crow era behind.

Coach Edward Temple pushes each team member to the limit and sees the possibilities in them that they can only dream of for themselves. The elite group of talent includes Wilma Rudolph, Barbara Jones, Lucinda Williams, Martha Hudson, Willye B. White and Shirley Crowder: women who once were and should still be known world-wide. Ultimately the team's drive is for more than medals: Coach Temple and the Tigerbelles want to change the world's perception of what a group of young Black women in the Jim Crow south are capable of. Tigerbelles is a multi-layered inspirational tale of triumph over adversity.



# *Praise* FOR THE TIGERBELLES

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"This inspiring book chronicles the compelling journey of an underdog track team from Nashville, TN, as they raced over potholes on dusty dirt roads toward an eventual Olympic Gold victory. Aime Card shines a bright light on these extraordinary women, and I'm excited this story is being told."

**—Kimberly Williams-Paisley, actor and New York Times bestselling author of *Where the Light Gets In***

"The story of the Tigerbelles is one of the most inspiring tales in the history of athletics. Coach Ed Temple and an incredibly talented group of Olympians overcame barriers of race, class, and gender to become the most dominant track program in the world. Drawing on deep research and more than sixty years of interviews, Aime Card deftly brings this compelling story to life in *The Tigerbelles*. This is American history that must not be forgotten. Thanks to this fascinating, timely, and highly readable book, the story of remarkable women succeeding against the tallest odds will be enjoyed for generations to come."

**—Andrew Maraniss, New York Times bestselling author of *Inaugural Ballers: The True Story of the First U.S. Women's Olympic Basketball Team***

"The Tigerbelles is not only for sports lovers, but for anyone who values triumph over adversity, untold historical stories, women supporting women, and the collective power of a team breaking the mold. Their story is heartbreaking and heartwarming in equal measure."

**—Laura Munson, New York Times and USA Today bestselling author, and founder of the acclaimed Haven Writing Retreats**

"Through vivid storytelling, Aime Alley Card underscores the dogged determination it took for young, black, women track and field athletes to train in the 1950s Jim Crow South and triumph in Olympic competitions. Led by the indomitable Wilma Rudolph, Tennessee State's Tigerbelles pushed past societal obstacles to inspire successive generations of girls and women to excel in sports, even as they also confront tough challenges."

**—Melissa Ludtke, former Sports Illustrated reporter who fought a court battle for equal rights, *Ludtke v. Kuhn*, in the 1970s**

# Praise **CONTINUED**

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“The Tigerbelles were historic trailblazers three times over— breaking racial barriers, gender barriers, and setting records for their sport that still awe 50 years later. Aime Alley Card not only vividly captures this riveting and remarkable story itself, but also the sheer improbability of it all: gold medals over Jim Crow.”

**- Ted Reinstein, author of *Before Brooklyn: The Unsung Heroes Who Helped Break Baseball's Color Barrier***

“Three cheers for the triumphant Tigerbelles—the fastest women in the world! Aime Card shines a light on the team's struggles against fierce racial- and gender-based discrimination. Tigerbelles is a must read about determined women who blazed a trail all the way to the Olympic podium.”

**— Jean Duffy, Author of *Soccer Grannies: The South African Women Who Inspire the World***

“There are so many reasons to love The Tigerbelles! This is a book for everyone—whether you love sports stories, feminist stories, racial justice stories, adventure stories, stories about overcoming adversity, or stories about friendship and family. The Tigerbelles are truly an inspiration for all, and Aime Alley Card has written a gripping and engaging work of narrative nonfiction that allows the great women of the Tigerbelles team to speak for themselves. Full of quotes from the incredible women athletes and drawing on a plethora of original source material, Card shares the legendary track team's story in a heartwarming and powerful book that will inspire everyone who reads it. The Tigerbelles were a triumph, and this wonderful book is, too.”

**— E.B. Bartels, author of *Good Grief: On Loving Pets, Here and Hereafter***



For the past several years, Aime Alley Card has been researching, interviewing, and writing about the Tennessee State Tigerbelles and those who supported them along their path. She conducted and reviewed hundreds of hours of interviews and read just as many books and articles, ranging from concurrent to retrospective. She is a nonfiction on editor for *Pangyrus* literary magazine, a board member for the Women's National Book Association, Boston Chapter, and serves on her town's cultural council supporting educational programs.

Aime Card is the author of *And Beneath it All Was Love*, a memoir about her experience with breast cancer, and *The Tigerbelles: Olympic Legends of Tennessee State*, a nonfiction narrative about a women's track team in 1960 and their journey to the Olympics from her hometown in Nashville. On the best days, you can find her walking a beach on the North Shore of Boston with her sidekick, Serendipity, baking with her daughter, listening to her son bang on the drums, or with a glass of wine in her hand by the firepit with her husband.

*About The Author*

AIME ALLEY CARD

# *A Letter* FROM THE AUTHOR

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Hello and thank you for your interest in The Tigerbelles!

For the past several years I have been researching, interviewing and writing about the Tennessee State Tigerbelles and those who supported them along their path. I've conducted and reviewed hundreds of hours of interviews and read just as many books and articles, ranging from concurrent to retrospective. My grandfather was one of the fortunate people in their orbit as he was the track coach and Physical Education Department Head at Vanderbilt while Coach Edward Temple was in his prime, which is how I came to know their story.

I never reached a level to graduate from sneakers to spikes myself, but my family's love of the sport permeated somehow. I remember my father cheering me on when I finally mustered enough speed to get a yellow ribbon (I think there might have only been four runners) in a summer league meet. He said, you looked as fast as a Tigerbelle out there. I knew that was high praise and that I didn't deserve it, but still it puffed my chest out.

Learning more about the Tigerbelles and Coach Temple over these past few years has been a true joy and writing about them one of my greatest challenges. After years of pouring through books, newspapers, recorded interviews and old news reels, including my personal interviews with Edward Temple himself, former Tigerbelle and current TSU coach Chandra Cheesborough, and multiple athletes and residents of Nashville during the time, I hope to share their story. These women are too important to go unknown to future generations.

I was born and raised in Nashville, Tennessee with deep ties in the community still. My research skills began with an Art History degree from Millsaps College, and have continued throughout my life. I am a nonfiction editor for Pangyrus literary magazine, a board member for the Women's National Book Association, Boston Chapter, and serve on my town's cultural council supporting educational programs.

# *Short Statement* ABOUT THE TIGERBELLES

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One hot Southern summer in 1960 at Tennessee State University, a regional HBCU, a coach and his team of women runners, called the Tigerbelles, sprinted on a dirt track, dodging potholes and cow piles, preparing for a shot to run on the world stage at the Olympics in Rome. Eight women on the team made it to the final competition, and four of them came back home with gold medals. This is the extraordinary story of how one team set the pace for women's athletics forever, and how the world fell in love with the Tigerbelles.

## *Press* PHOTOS

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