

# The Scoop on Teen Pregnancy



▲ Author Melinda Robertson

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Author Melinda Robertson, a native Washingtonian, wrote a dynamic youth novel on teen pregnancy entitled *Motherhood... What You Don't Know* (Morris Publishing, 2004, 149 pages, \$13.00). Drawn from Washington's experiences as a struggling teenage mother, the novel is a must-read for all teenage girls who have fairy tale dreams of raising a cute little bundle of joy.

"Motherhood is a lifetime commit-

ment and a child of 13 and 14 years of age is incapable of making such a commitment," Robertson said in an interview recently. "Although the rate of pregnancies outside of marriage in the teen years is up to about 70 percent for ages 15 to 19, young girls today seem to think that becoming a mother is a 'rite of passage' into womanhood. However, they have no idea of the major responsibility that becoming a mother entails," she said emphatically.

She wrote this book as a vehicle for teens to embark on a journey through motherhood. "The babies may be cute, and who can resist the smell of Johnson & Johnson baby lotion? It's the sweetest smell ever," Robertson said. "However, when your belly is being stretched to the limits, you have gained 50 pounds and the baby's daddy, your 'first true love,' is long gone and you're up to 3:00 in the morning feeding this baby, the truth comes out," added Robertson.

In the novel, Nicole Washington is a brilliant honor roll student who gets pregnant after losing her virginity. Her dream of attending Spelman College is dashed. Eventually, her par-

ents and best childhood friend discover her untold secret.

Predictably, Tony Woods, a handsome football star, loses interest in her after scoring another kind of touchdown with the young Washington. Distraught over Woods' apparent disregard, Washington receives comfort from her mother. Washington attempts to rumble the gates of hell to force Woods to acknowledge his child and take care of his responsibilities but his mother serves as the gatekeeper with a devil's pitchfork.

Eventually, Washington learns the facts of life. She must raise her child and graduate from high school. In the end she swallows the bittersweet pill of heartache and Wood's neglect.

Ironically, this is an inspirational novel and a quick read. Robertson provides a wealth of child-rearing knowledge and self-love wisdom in her prologue and final chapter. She discusses all the pros and cons of motherhood.

"Mothers, please respect 'yourself' and your child at all times. We lead by example... You are your child's role model and always remember that the decisions you make in life will have some type of impact on your child," she writes.