

C. Arthur Ellis Biography

C. Arthur Ellis, Jr. was born in the town of Live Oak, Florida right after World War II. He holds master's degrees in medical physiology and English literature and a PhD in the humanities. He is married to Leslie Ellis, his wife of 45 years, and has two sons and 3 grandchildren.

Dr. Ellis wrote numerous technical manuals and curricular materials during his career in medical administration and education, when he and his wife established welfare-to-work transition schools in several states and consulted nationally. Dr. Leslie Ellis designed a National Alliance of Business award-winning program, Project Hope. Project Hope was honored by President Reagan in 1988 for its high success rate in transitioning welfare recipients into productive employment, and became a model for similar programs across the country because of its unique rehabilitation model of education and training.

After his retirement, Dr. Art Ellis turned to his favorite past-time of writing. Since he had always been fascinated with the hometown story of Ruby McCollum, he decided that this would be his first book.

Ruby McCollum was a wealthy African-American woman who shot and killed her white physician and state senator elect lover, Dr. C. LeRoy Adams in 1952. Memories of Dr. Adams, Ruby McCollum and the traumatic events that affected their families were etched into his mind as a child.

As a first effort to explore the story of Ruby McCollum, Dr. Ellis discovered that the trial transcript was no longer in the Suwannee County courthouse and that portions of the microfilm record at the State of Florida archive were missing. After years of research, he managed to compile a close facsimile of the transcript from two different sources, annotated the transcript, and published several works on the Ruby McCollum story. He then donated a copy of his version of the transcript to the Florida Collection at the University of Florida where it is archived in the Smathers Library.

His ten-year research effort of restoring the trial transcript also involved reviewing hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles, interviewing many of the characters in the story, recording his own memories, including drawing a floor plan of Adams' office where the murder took place. He also commissioned over 50 oil paintings of the places and characters central to the Ruby McCollum story to preserve the "look" of this historical event for future generations. Finally, he documented information contributed by his father who worked with Dr. Adams at the Suwannee County hospital.

For his work on Ruby McCollum, Dr. Ellis was a featured guest speaker at Miami Book Fair International, and was invited to speak on the Ruby McCollum story by LA Theatre Works on the anniversary of William Huie's investigative work on the same case. He has also been a featured guest speaker on the Ruby McCollum story at the Florida Historical Society and the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society.

Dr. Ellis and his wife of 45 years, Dr. Leslie Ellis (who holds dual PhDs in theatre and psychology), then became interested in the fundamentalist involvement in American politics because of their concern about how this interest group is attempting to erode individual freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution.

Their research on this topic led to the publication of *Bible Bullies: How Fundamentalists Got The Good Book So Wrong*. Drs. Art and Leslie Ellis maintain that the pseudo-Christian far-right wing of the Republican party has used the Bible to abuse children and to bully identified out-groups, including women, members of non-Christian religions, the LGBT community and food stamp recipients, departing from the socially conscious message brought by Jesus.

Dr. Ellis and his wife live between homes in Florida and Georgia and enjoy working with rescue animals.