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Autobiographical Children's Book Published About a South Baltimore Pigeon

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Gary Meyers recently released his first and only children's book titled *A Pigeon Named Pete*, an autobiographical story about his mother and her pet pigeon. Meyers, who is retired after a 42-year career as an engineer at NASA, decided to write the book as a dedication to the love story between his mother, Muriel Jones, and Pete after discovering news articles written about the two.

Jones was born in 1919 and grew up at the corner of Ostend and Patapsco St. in Federal Hill/South Baltimore. When she was 18 months old, her grandfather, who was a painter, found a baby pigeon on the top of a tall building. He realized the pigeon wasn't getting enough to eat and brought him home to Muriel. They provided him a cage and some food, and named him Pete.

They allowed Pete to roam the house, and later the backyard, until he eventually would leave the backyard and fly around the neighborhood after Muriel would leave for school, returning when she came home each day. He became well known around the neighborhood, especially at the former Southern District Police Station across the street at 28 E. Ostend St., now the South Baltimore Learning Center.

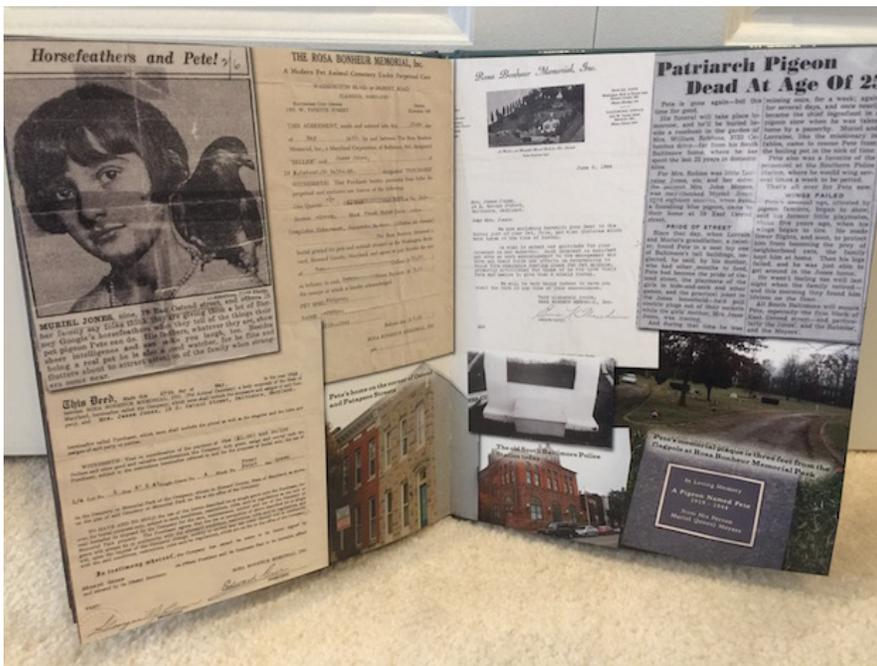
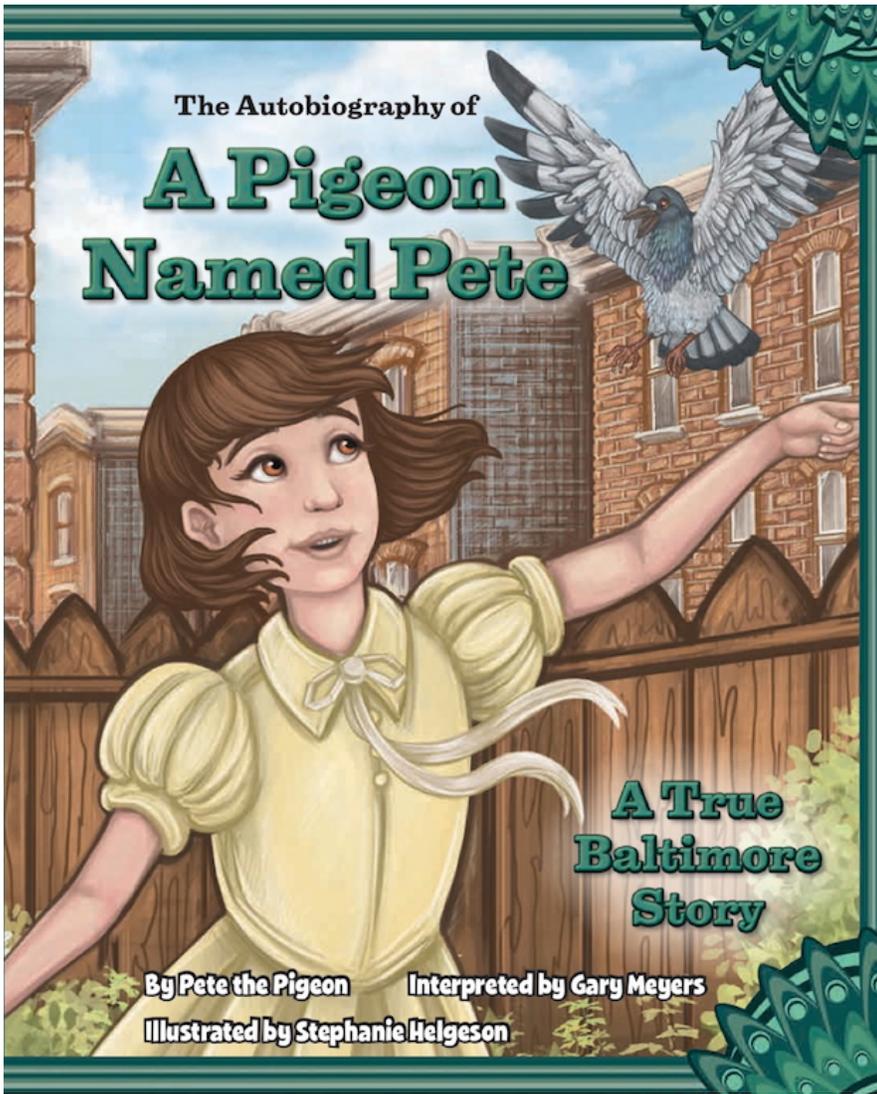
Pete was known by South Baltimore residents and would fly to people's window sills for snacks. Outside the house he would play hide-and-seek with the neighborhood kids, and in the house he would pull plugs out of the wall and make nests from straw broom bristles in Muriel's father's shoes.

Pete had a couple scary moments around the neighborhood. A cat once grabbed him by the neck, but was saved when neighbors came to the rescue. Growing up during the Great Depression, there was lots of hunger and desperation, and a homeless man once caught him and was about to have him for dinner. More than 200 people went around the neighborhood looking for him and luckily found and retrieved him in time.

A Pigeon Named Pete retells many of these stories alongside illustrations by Stephanie Helgeson. The book also features news articles written about Pete, which Meyers used to learn the story.

Pete lived to be 25 years old, dying a few years before Meyers was born. Pete is buried at The Rosa Bonheur Memorial, Inc. Pet Cemetery in Eldridge. Meyers volunteers at the cemetery where he cuts the grass.

A Pigeon Named Pete was published by Mascott Books and is available locally at Protean Books and the Light Street Branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, as well as at Barnes & Noble, Amazon, and additional stores.



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