



# The Courage to Hope: How I Stood Up to the Politics of Fear

*Shirley Sherrod*

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## **The Courage to Hope: How I Stood Up to the Politics of Fear** Shirley Sherrod

Sherrod was a lifelong activist who served as Georgia's first black director of rural development. In the summer of 2010, a right-wing blogger disseminated an ill-conceived video clip of a speech Sherrod had given to the Georgia NAACP, intending to make her an example of "reverse racism." The media frenzy that ensued caused the Obama administration to demand her resignation. After hearing from Sherrod herself and learning the entire truth of what she said in that speech, the administration tried to backtrack. Public officials and media professionals admitted to being duped and apologized for their rush to judgment. Ultimately, Sherrod found herself the subject of a teachable moment. The Courage to Hope addresses this regrettable moment in American politics, but it also tells Sherrod's own story of growing up on a farm in southwest Georgia during the final violent years of Jim Crow.

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