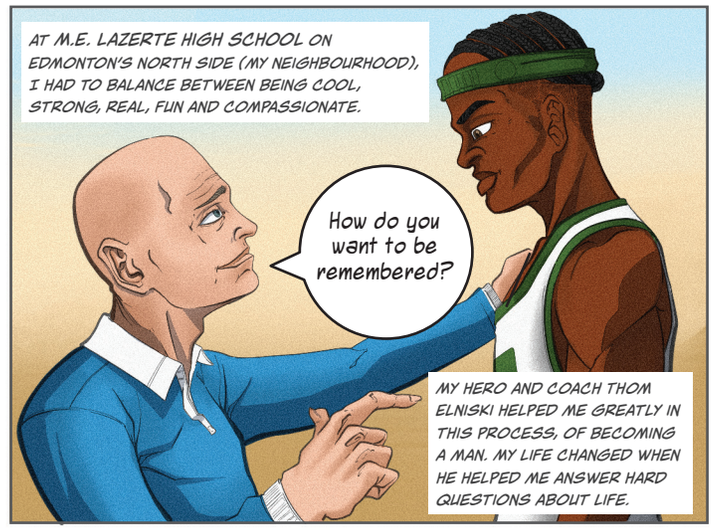
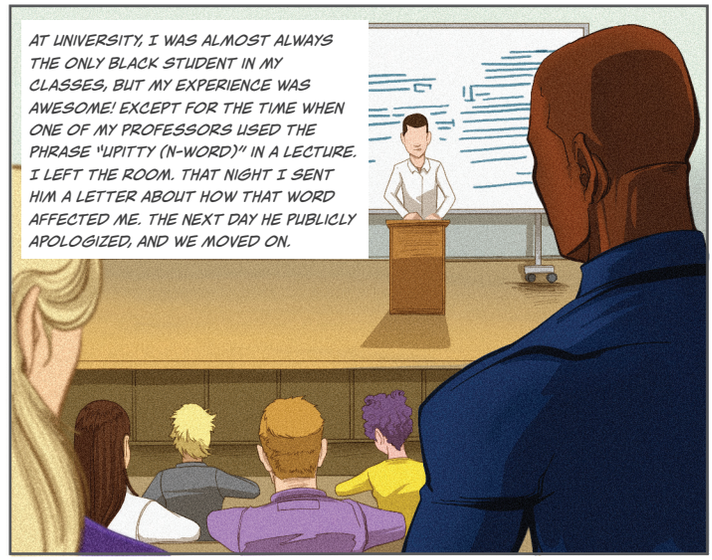
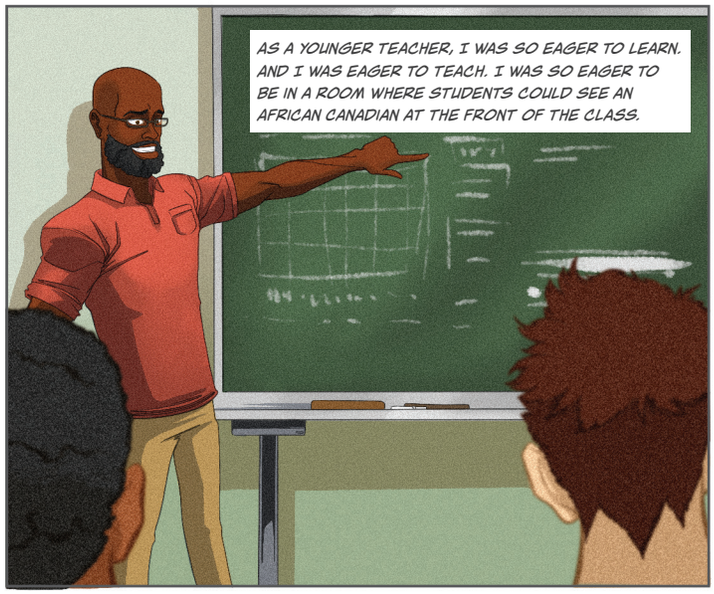
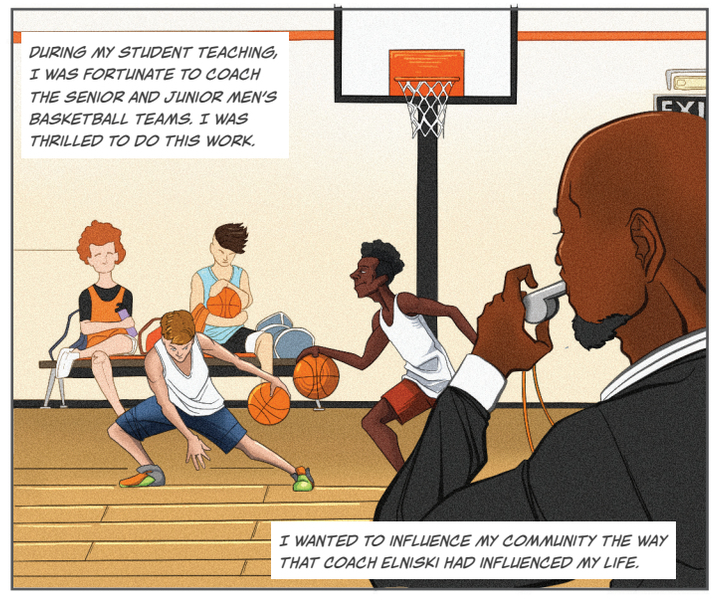
MRS. MILLINGTON
MS. SMITH
Black Queen majesty.
MY FIRST BLACK TEACHER WAS MRS. MILLINGTON IN JUNIOR HIGH. SHE WAS DARK SKINNED, EBONY ELEGANCE.
ROSALIND SMITH WAS MY FIRST AND ONLY BLACK PRINCIPAL. SHE TAUGHT ME THE IMPORTANCE OF RESPECTING THE CULTURE.
I MISBEHAVED ONCE, BUT ONE GOOD TALK MADE ME RESPECT ALL QUEENS IN THIS PROFESSION.


AT M.E. LAZERTE HIGH SCHOOL ON EDMONTON'S NORTH SIDE (MY NEIGHBOURHOOD), I HAD TO BALANCE BETWEEN BEING COOL, STRONG, REAL, FUN AND COMPASSIONATE.
How do you want to be remembered?
MY HERO AND COACH THOM ELNISKI HELPED ME GREATLY IN THIS PROCESS, OF BECOMING A MAN. MY LIFE CHANGED WHEN HE HELPED ME ANSWER HARD QUESTIONS ABOUT LIFE.

AFTER COACH ELNISKI PASSED AWAY IN 2004, I REFLECTED ON MY FUTURE. MY MOM SUGGESTED I BECOME A TEACHER. SHE WAS MY WISDOM, AND ONE OF THE FIRST BLACK INSTRUCTORS AT THE NORTHERN ALBERTA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY. I REALIZED THAT I WANTED TO DO THE WORK THAT SHE (AND MR. E) DID.


AT UNIVERSITY, I WAS ALMOST ALWAYS THE ONLY BLACK STUDENT IN MY CLASSES, BUT MY EXPERIENCE WAS AWESOME! EXCEPT FOR THE TIME WHEN ONE OF MY PROFESSORS USED THE PHRASE "UPITTY (N-WORD)" IN A LECTURE. I LEFT THE ROOM. THAT NIGHT I SENT HIM A LETTER ABOUT HOW THAT WORD AFFECTED ME. THE NEXT DAY HE PUBLICLY APOLOGIZED, AND WE MOVED ON.


AS A YOUNGER TEACHER, I WAS SO EAGER TO LEARN. AND I WAS EAGER TO TEACH. I WAS SO EAGER TO BE IN A ROOM WHERE STUDENTS COULD SEE AN AFRICAN CANADIAN AT THE FRONT OF THE CLASS.


DURING MY STUDENT TEACHING, I WAS FORTUNATE TO COACH THE SENIOR AND JUNIOR MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAMS. I WAS THRILLED TO DO THIS WORK.
I WANTED TO INFLUENCE MY COMMUNITY THE WAY THAT COACH ELNISKI HAD INFLUENCED MY LIFE.