

DECOTEAU J. IRBY, PH.D.

I create teaching and learning experiences, music and stories, and opportunities for people to be in community. Be it through music, encouraging the use of urban green spaces, or creating opportunities for Black people to generate wealth and wellness, my priorities are grounded in “going at it” together and creating space for people to shine.

Throughout my life, I’ve created all sorts of things, spaces, and experiences. These include businesses, such as Derute Consulting Cooperative, a firm I co-founded in 2013; Visioning Black Spaces LLC, a collective of families that pool and invest our resources to improve Chicago’s Black neighborhoods; and Deaky Bug Creative Works LLC, a firm I use to curate and finance my personal creative endeavors and collaborations.

I’m a professor at University of Illinois at Chicago and author or co-editor of several books, including *Stuck Improving: Racial Equity and School Leadership* (Harvard Education Press) and a children’s book *Magical Black Tears: A Protest Story* (Derute Consulting Cooperative).

Through all of my work, I’m committed to creating spaces that bring people together in community. I am active in my neighborhood community garden and I serve as treasurer for my local park advisory council. Finally, I am a self-taught guitarist, songwriter, performer, and recording artist; I’ve released two albums that are available on my website at www.decoteauirby.com.