



**PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
PHOTOS ATTACHED**

September 18, 2018

Cornelia Connelly School

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**Connelly Students Skype with “Little Rock Nine” Civil Rights Hero
and Congressional Gold Medal Recipient**

September 18, 2018 Anaheim, CA – Cornelia Connelly School students had the honor and privilege to Skype with author and civil rights hero, Melba Patillo Beals, on September 12 as part of the school’s All-School Reads program, which unites the school community by having all students, faculty, and staff read a book that has literary merit and delivers a strong social message. This year’s book choice was “March Forward, Girl.” The author, Melba Patillo Beals, grew up in Little Rock, Arkansas, during a time of segregation - where life for African-Americans was far from just, and she and her family lived in a state of constant fear.

When integration of previously all-white public schools was initiated, Melba was one of the heroic “Little Rock Nine,” who were students chosen to be among the first to integrate Little Rock’s Central High School. The Little Rock Nine were met with such opposition from the white community that they needed a military escort for their safety. Years later, Melba and the rest of the Little Rock Nine, were award the Congressional Gold Medal, which is the highest civilian honor our country awards.

Melba talked to Connelly students and faculty via Skype in a special assembly where she spoke of her life experiences, and engaged the students by answering their questions, spoke of her faith, and encouraged everyone to have respect and love for everyone. Several students came forward to ask Melba questions, including one who asked “Would you change anything in your childhood?” Without hesitating, Melba replied, “I wouldn’t change it. There’s always purpose to what’s happened to you. I lived through it so I could share it with you.” She added that she drew strength and encouragement from Martin Luther King, Jr.’s words that she was doing this “for generations yet unborn.”

Connelly students, faculty, and staff were grateful for the opportunity to speak with Melba Patillo Beals. The Skype session sparked many though-provoking conversations among the Connelly community that could be heard throughout the day on campus.

Cornelia Connelly School in Anaheim Founded and sponsored by the Society of the Holy Child Jesus in 1961, Connelly is a Catholic, independent, college-preparatory high school for young women. The school is a member of the Holy Child Network of Schools and is sponsored by the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus. The Society of the Holy Child Jesus operates schools – preschool through college level – in the United States, Europe and Africa. Exchange programs offer Connelly's students unique opportunities to study at Holy Child Schools in the United States and Europe. Connelly's exceptional curriculum and programs prepare young women to be leaders based on an underlying philosophy of trust, reverence and respect. For more information about the school, please go to www.connellyschoollanaheim.org.



Caption for above photo 1 (Catherine-question1200px.jpg): Connelly student, Catherine Hoyos '19, was one of many students who were able to ask author and civil rights hero, Melba Patillo Beals, a question via Skype in a special assembly to discuss the author's book "March Forward, Girl" which was the book chosen for Connelly's "All-School Reads" program.



Caption for above photo 2 (elyse-melba-onscreen1200px.jpg): Connelly faculty member, Elyse Rieder, asks author and civil rights hero, Melba Patillo Beals, a question via Skype in a special assembly to discuss the author's book "March Forward, Girl" which was the book chosen for Connelly's "All-School Reads" program.