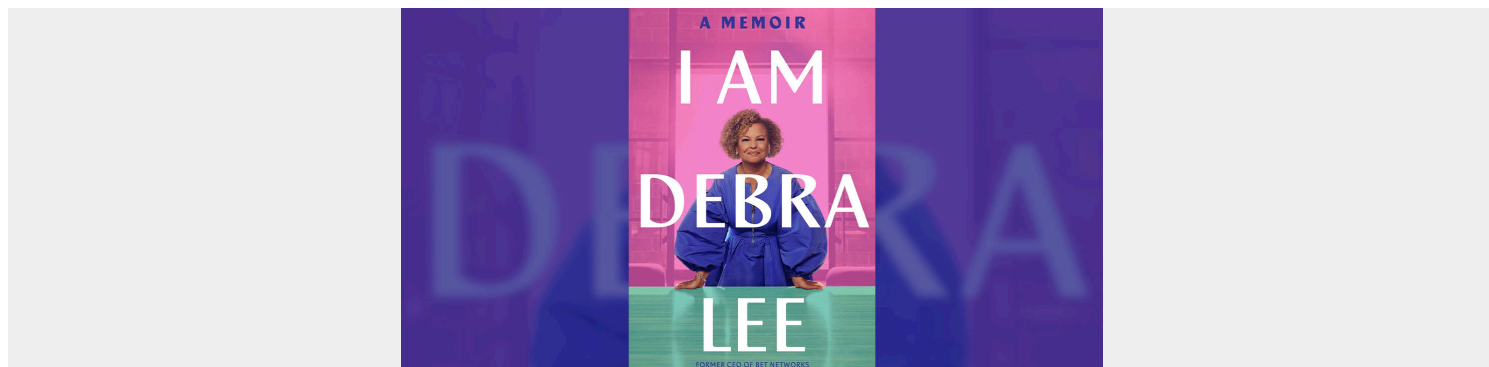


"I AM DEBRA LEE: A MEMOIR" BY DEBRA LEE

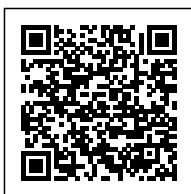
Posted on March 9, 2023 by OAKLAND POST

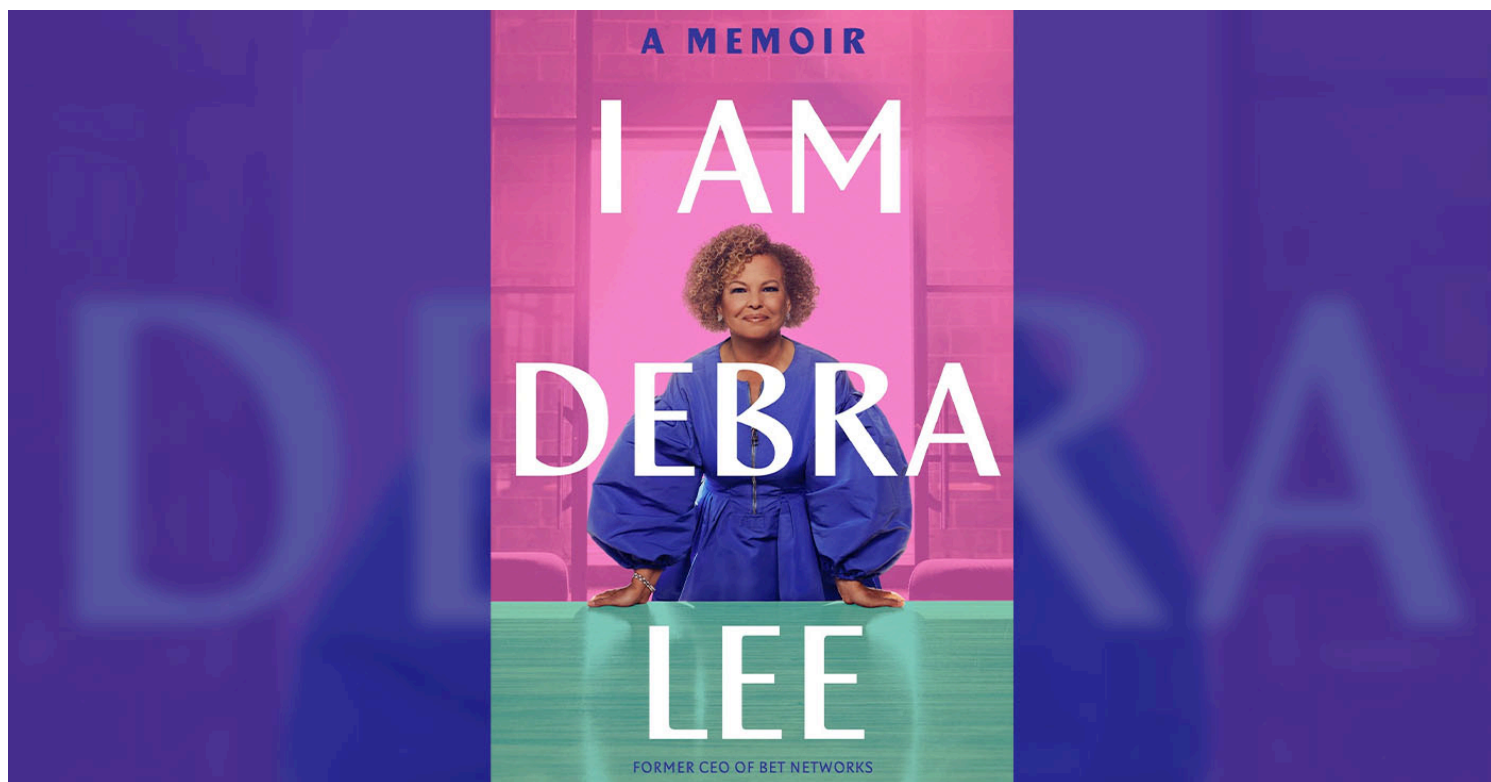


Everybody's looking at you. They're wondering what you're going to do next, because you often surprise them. They don't know what you're about to say because you're never predictable. So stand up, throw your shoulders back, let them watch and learn a thing or two. As in the new memoir, "I Am Debra Lee" by Debra Lee, represent. The post "I Am Debra Lee: A Memoir" by Debra Lee first appeared on Post News Group.

Category: [Uncategorized](#)

Tags: ["I Am Debra Lee"](#), [absorbing](#), [BET](#), [black culture](#), [Black woman](#), [Bob Johnson](#), [Book Reviews](#), [Books](#), [CEO of Black Entertainment Television](#), [Commentary](#), [COO](#), [debra lee](#), [Entertainment](#), [fascinating memoir](#), [featured](#), [grade school](#), [industry](#), [law firm](#), [lawyer](#), [Lifestyle](#), [long hours](#), [marriage](#), [Media](#), [media empire](#), [Mentor](#), [no apologies](#), [Oakland Post](#), [opportunity](#), [overwhelming workload](#), [personal sacrifices](#), [Post News Group](#), [pushed the envelope](#), [reaching for the stars](#), [represent](#), [reputation](#), [soul-searching time abortion](#), [tabloids](#), [Terri Schlichenmeyer](#), [Terry Schlichenmeyer](#), [to uphold](#)





c.2023, Legacy Lit Books, \$29.00, 256 pages

By Terry Schlichenmeyer

Everybody's looking at you.

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Back when she was still in grade school, little Debra Lee's father decided that she would be a lawyer someday — and so she was. Though she often pushed the envelope and was her own person, it was hard to even think of disappointing the Major, a man who always admonished Lee to be a "nice girl."

Back then, Lee "lived and breathed Black culture," a feeling she carried through law school and into her first big job at a law firm that "treated its associates well," and where she instinctively found a mentor who helped her in her niche. He passed along to her a few choice clients, which eventually led Lee to a life-changing introduction to Bob Johnson, who was then the CEO of Black Entertainment Television, or BET.

It was a soul-searching time for Lee. Personally, she'd had a pregnancy she didn't want, and an abortion, then a marriage that failed. Professionally, the law firm she worked for was no longer a

good fit. Johnson offered her a job and a title, but it involved a considerable salary cut, which was tough to take. Still, Lee looked at the long picture and leapt at the opportunity.

The job had its downsides, specifically, eternally long hours and an overwhelming workload with no work-life balance whatsoever, but Lee was undaunted. She learned about the industry and herself, found her limits and sailed past them, and enjoyed the chance to befriend people whose names pepper the tabloids.

She never seriously considered reaching for the stars until she was named COO, with a public face to maintain, a reputation to uphold, and a list of things she'd never do.

And then she did one of them...

For readers who are unfamiliar with the whole story, let's just say that you'll want to be prepared. "I Am Debra Lee" contains a big ka-boom.

Leading up to that, though, is a treat: the inner mechanics of a media empire are told side-by-side here with the story of a long, exhausting journey and the personal sacrifices it demanded. It isn't presented as a burden, however; instead, author Debra Lee holds her tale with a steely grip and no apologies, making sure that she's clear on the extra work it took being a Black woman in a mostly-man's world. There's not a single ounce of poor-me in that but rather, a series of subtle lessons to accompany the outright advice that Lee scatters about.

And then there's that ka-boom. Read about it from this first-person point of view, and you won't be sorry. If you're ready for an absorbing, fascinating memoir that pulls no punches, "I Am Debra Lee" is absolutely worth a look.

The post ["I Am Debra Lee: A Memoir" by Debra Lee](#) first appeared on [Post News Group](#).

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