

Soldier, Sister, Savant

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CC



$$Z_{n+1} = Z_n^2 + C$$



WILMA DAVIDSON, Ed.D.
DIANA de AVILA, M.S.Ed.





Endorsements

"Diana de Avila is no ordinary woman. She survived a deadly motorcycle accident while serving in the military police; she overcame her devastation when diagnosed with multiple sclerosis; and one day, she awakened as an acquired savant. De Avila is nothing short of a scientific miracle, shaking up society's stale preconceptions about human potential. Vividly narrated in the highly relatable voice of Wilma Davidson, *Soldier, Sister, Savant* is an immensely readable, intimate, and life-affirming story of coming to grips with disability and adversity and of freeing the genius in your brain."

Dr. Berit Brogaard, D.M. Sci., Ph.D., Author of *Hatred: Understanding Our Most Dangerous Emotion* and *The Superhuman Mind*, among others
Professor and Director of Brogaard Lab for Multisensory Research at the University of Miami



"If we measure life by what is possible and what can be gained, Diana de Avila's story is a remarkable example. Her passion for life and perseverance shines through. This is a must-read story of true human potential when faced with the challenges and consequences of living with a traumatic brain injury and a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis. In spite of this reality, we also see an incredible transformation of new abilities and potential unfold before our eyes."

Keith W. L. Rafal, MD, MPH Founder, Our Heart Speaks, Inc (OHS)
www.ourheartspeaks.org

Assistant Clinical Professor, Brown University
Adjunct/Clinical Assistant Professor, Tufts University Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

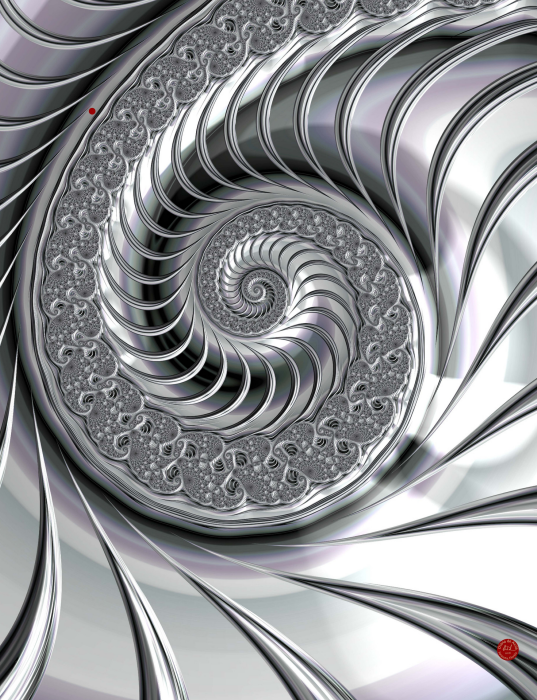
"De Avila's fascinating journey includes reassuring and encouraging correspondence so characteristic of my late father, a remarkable man committed to helping others discover the gifts within themselves."

Joni Treffert Stine
Fond du Lac, Wisconsin



"Diana de Avila has experienced injury, illness and adversity yet continued to move forward. A recurrence of illness, which could have proved a setback, instead brought a gift that has translated into an impressive body of artwork. In *Soldier, Sister, Savant*, the reader is provided insight into Ms. de Avila's journey and navigation to a new reality."

Donald Higgins, M.D.
Chief Physician Educator, National Center for Patient Safety, Veterans Health Administration
Professor of Neurology, Albany Medical College



Endorsements

"Sometimes we spend a lifetime trying to find our talents, and sometimes our talents find us. This is the story of Diana de Avila, an extraordinary woman with an extraordinary gift and a heart full of resilience."

Mafer Bencomo, Documentary filmmaker and Ringling College and Design student; <https://vimeo.com/maferbencomo>

"After recounting Diana de Avila's early careers as a soldier, nun, and successful business woman, Dr. Wilma Davidson and Diana delineate her processes and accomplishments as a visual artist savant induced by multiple sclerosis and a prior traumatic brain injury. A unique and important contribution to the literature on a creative phenomenon."

Janet Emig, Ed.D.

Professor Emerita, Rutgers University

Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters (DHL) from Mt. Holyoke College as a Distinguished Alumnae

Second Ed.D. Honorary Doctorate from Monmouth University for service to the state of New Jersey in the teaching of writing

"The only thing more fascinating than Diana de Avila's visually stunning artwork is the story of how she came upon her rare talent. This artist's journey is one of challenges met and overcome. *Soldier, Sister, Savant* provides an engaging, personal look into the little-known world of acquired savant syndrome and a deeper understanding of how Diana's amazing artwork is born."

Dr. Clay Montcastle, Director, Virginia War Memorial

"Works created by most savants have an engaging style and gift containing the key to a beauty most of us can't perceive. However, de Avila's body of work brilliantly bridges the gap while offering visually sumptuous and compelling works that demand to be examined and understood."

Tim Jaeger, painter

www.timjaegerpainter.com



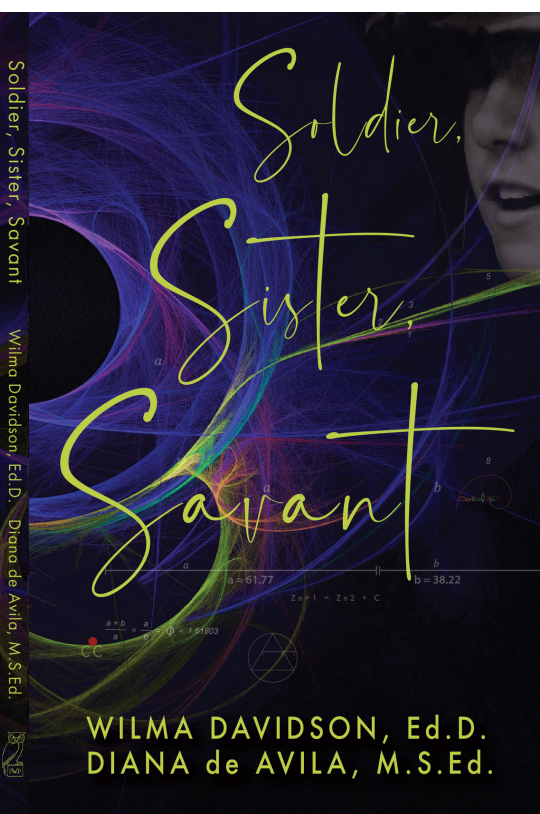
About The Authors

Wilma Davidson, Ed.D., is a former faculty member at the University of South Florida and the president of a communications consulting firm Davidson & Associates. In her consulting work to Fortune 500 companies, educational and governmental institutions, Davidson advises clients how to put their “best foot forward—in writing and in person.”

In addition to serving as a writing and presentation-skills coach, Davidson is the author or co-author of five published books on writing and business. Her books include the third edition of *Business Writing: What Works, What Won't*, *Writing a Winning College Application Essay*, and *The Bell Labs Editor*. She has also served as an author and editor of *Most Likely to Succeed at Work: How Work Is Just Like High School—Crib Notes for Getting Along and Getting Ahead Amidst Bullies, Teachers' Pets, Cheerleaders, and Other Members of the “Class.”*

A board member of the Sarasota Branch of the National League of American Pen Women (NLAPW), Davidson met her co-author de Avila of the book *Soldier, Sister, Savant* through their professional women's organization, the NLAPW. She also serves as an advisor to the Savant Artist Collective.

She lives in Longboat Key, Florida.





About The Authors

Diana de Avila, M.S.Ed., Diana de Avila's discovery of her artistic gift is a highly unusual story encompassing a journey that began not in art classes but after worsening traumatic brain injury (TBI) and a relapse of Multiple Sclerosis (MS).

De Avila initially chose a career path in the United States Army, enlisting right out of high school. A near-fatal motorcycle accident derailed her intentions to serve in the military. The US Army Disabled Vet continued her search after a prolonged and difficult recovery. She continued to suffer from her injuries affecting both her vision and cognition and, at the time, from undiagnosed MS. Spiritually devout, de Avila entered the convent but later left the Daughters of Saint Paul to pursue other avenues. Excelling in academics, de Avila studied psychology, then entered into business ventures and work as a web architect, all before finding her artistic voice.

De Avila, is one of a very few people worldwide to have what is known as Acquired Savant Syndrome. Active in engaging members of the medical community in unmasking her syndrome, de Avila serves as Director and Founding Member of the Savant Artist Collective.

Without any type of formal training in art, de Avila has composed award-winning and sought-after works of digital art. She has produced over 1000 pieces of art, experimenting with software, Bezier curves, fractals, algorithms, and fractal geometry in creating not only original works but in pioneering processes of generating art. De Avila and her co-author Wilma Davidson wrote the inspirational, non-fiction hybrid memoir *Soldier, Sister, Savant* that chronicles de Avila's unique path to becoming an inspirational artist, as well as featuring examples of her art. Both de Avila and Davidson are members of the Sarasota, Florida Branch of the National League of American Pen Women (NLAPW), an organization of professional artists, writers, and composers, where they first met. De Avila is also a member of the Florida Artists Group, Inc. (FLAG) and has recently been accepted as a member of the National Association of Women Artists (NAWA).

She lives in Osprey, FL.



About the Book

Title: *Soldier, Sister, Savant*

Authors: Wilma Davidson and Diana de Avila

Non-fiction/memoir/art

Full color Ebook and POD

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Pen Women Press

Pricing

Paperback \$34.00

ePub \$8.99

Where to buy the book

(Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Books-a-Million, Powell's and BookBaby Bookshop)

Contact

Wilma Davidson: wilma@soldiersistersavant.com

Diana de Avila: diana@soldiersistersavant.com

www.soldiersistersavant.com

Soldier, Sister, Savant is the inspirational and unique story of Diana de Avila and her journey to artistic genius as an Acquired Art Savant. Her creative fractal art emerged after worsening traumatic brain injury (TBI) and a relapse of Multiple Sclerosis. Acquired Savants are a rarity; female Acquired Savants even rarer.

The story of Diana de Avila and her Acquired Savant Syndrome, a little-known and understudied phenomenon, is an honest and compelling one in which she details her struggles and sudden gifts. This hybrid memoir introduces readers to the digital art savant, not born with such talent but who arrives at it, literally, by accident. The authors share significant events in de Avila's life prior to the advent of her "accidental genius," as well as many examples of her art. Readers will discover the enormous role that faith, family, resilience, and resolve play in de Avila overcoming life-threatening odds in order to prolifically produce over 1000 pieces of extraordinary digital art.

For Immediate Release

Contact: Wilma Davidson, Ed.D.

Phone: 941-735-1888

Email: Wilma@soldiersistersavant.com

Website: <http://www.soldiersistersavant.com>

Date: September 27, 2021

BOOK BY RARE FEMALE SAVANT OFFERS CLOSE LOOK AT “ACCIDENTAL GENIUS”

Soldier, Sister, Savant by Wilma Davidson, Ed.D., and Diana de Avila, M.S.Ed. is the inspirational and rare story of Diana de Avila and her journey to artistic genius as an acquired art savant. Her creative digital art emerged after a traumatic brain injury (TBI) and exacerbation of multiple sclerosis. Acquired savants are a rarity; female acquired savants even rarer. Fewer than one hundred worldwide.

The story of Diana de Avila and her acquired savant syndrome, a little-heard-of and understudied phenomenon, is an honest and compelling one detailing her struggles and sudden gifts. This hybrid memoir introduces readers to the art savant, not born with such talent but who arrives at it, literally, by accident.

Davidson creates a very personal narrative with de Avila who, initially, chose a career in the United States Army, enlisting right out of high school. A near-fatal motorcycle accident derailed her early intentions to serve in the military. The US Army Disabled Vet continued her search for service after a prolonged, difficult recovery. She continued to suffer from injuries affecting both her vision and cognition and, at the time, from undiagnosed MS. Spiritually devout, de Avila entered a convent but later left to pursue other avenues. Excelling in academics, de Avila studied psychology, then entered several business ventures and worked as a web architect, all before finding her artistic voice.

*“Diana de Avila is no ordinary woman. She survived a catastrophic motorcycle accident while serving in the military police; she overcame her devastation when diagnosed with multiple sclerosis; and one day, she awakened as an acquired savant. De Avila is nothing short of a scientific miracle, shaking up society’s stale preconceptions about human potential. Vividly narrated in the highly relatable voice of Wilma Davidson, *Soldier, Sister, Savant* is an immensely readable, intimate, and life-affirming story of coming to grips with disability and adversity and of freeing the genius in your brain,”* offers Dr. Berit Brogaard, D.M. Sci., Ph.D., Director of Brogaard Lab for Multisensory Research at the University of Miami.

In addition to sharing significant events in de Avila’s life prior to the advent of her “accidental genius”, readers will discover the enormous role that faith, family, resilience, and resolve play in de Avila overcoming life-threatening odds in order to prolifically produce over 1000 pieces of extraordinary digital art since 2017, when her “gift” arrived.

Published by Pen Women Press (2021), *Soldier, Sister, Savant* takes readers into de Avila’s uncommon journey to her artistic gifts that began neither in art classes nor with any training in art. Davidson’s and de Avila’s hybrid memoir and art book contains many full-color prints of de Avila’s award-winning art and her pioneering processes of generating art.

Soldier, Sister, Savant is available through book distributors, including Amazon and Barnes and Noble, Books-a-Million, Powell’s, and BookBaby Bookshop.