

BIOGRAPHY OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN PANELISTS AT THE AFRICA VENIR INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION IN BONABERI-DOUALA/CAMEROON

June, 1-2, 2012

Fatimah Halim is an artist born into a family of writers, storytellers and musicians; she has garnered success as a Special Events Coordinator, professional performance artist, pop vocalist, ethnic dancer, and inspirational author and speaker. Just as the boundaries between art disciplines dissolve in Fatimah's work, the boundaries between life and art become transparent as she lives as a contribution to society. She is the designer, facilitator, and author Rites of Passage Programs for Phoenix area youth: This commitment to youth has driven her passion for the past fifteen years. Her dedication to promoting the development of women and girls is also evident in her Journey Home Program: An Arts Experience for Incarcerated Women; in her latest book, "You Grow Girl: A Rites of Passage Handbook for Growing Girls; and "Get Reel", a film production program targeting Phoenix area youths. She recently returned from Zhenzhou, China as a guest of the Shanghai Women's Federation, where she presented a workshop on her Rites of Passage Program at Sias International University.

She is currently the host of "Focus" a Cox Cable Television Talk Show and was co-host for KTAR radio's teen talk show "At the Crossroads"; cable talk show "Think About It: Perspectives from Women of Color"; and "Real Life Focus" on the former KISS Radio in Phoenix.

For over thirteen years, she has created and produced major cultural festivals and events for the City of Phoenix. These highly acclaimed productions, including the Mayor's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast, and the Human Relations Commission's Human Relations Awards Ceremony, promoted understanding and appreciation amongst all peoples and served to enhance the cultural image of Phoenix on a national level.

Her innovative productions were critical to favorably repositioning the city in the nation's eyes during the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. controversy. Her events have attracted up to 15,000 guests to venues including America West Arena, Phoenix Civic Plaza, and Phoenix Symphony Hall featuring notables like Stevie Wonder, Mrs. Rosa Parks, Martin Sheen, Blair Underwood, Coretta Scott King, and Gladys Knight.

Her other productions include:

- "The Gift". This heart-warming celebration of America's racial, gender, ethnic and religious diversity toured nationally for Chase Bank as part of their diversity initiative
- "The Seventh Song" a multi-media, multi-cultural production featured at Phoenix Symphony Hall
- "The Art of Healing", a cross-traditions healing ceremony featured at Phoenix's Orpheum Theater and
- The follow-up "The Art of Healing. The Journey Continues," an interactive healing sanctuary featuring practitioners and artists from a variety of cultures and healing arts genres.
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Fatimah began her professional life in New York City as back-up singer for Laura Nyro and recorded with Jimi Hendrix as a member of Ghettofighters. She traveled to Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, Brazil, the Bahamas, and throughout the American South studying her art and performing her stories. Venues include: the National Conference of Artists in Salvador-Bahia, Brazil; the National Black Storytellers Conference in South Carolina; the Phoenix Art Museum,

the Herberger Theater, and Phoenix Symphony Hall, where a dream was realized when the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra invited her back for an encore performance in their People's Pops Concert Series. She has toured, as a storyteller, with Rosa Parks, Mother of the modern day Civil Rights Movement and her highly acclaimed one woman show "She's So G.H.E.T.T.O. – Chronicles of a Ghetto Girl Gone Goddess" has brought audiences to their feet in tears and laughter. She is currently wowing audiences with her new one woman show "Juliette Must Die – A Story of a Woman in Conflict with Herself."

In 2011, Fatimah was presented the Icon Award by the Worthy Institute; 2010 Links Living History Award for the Arts; 2010 National Council of Negro Women Award recipient; 2009 Hon Kachina Award; the YWCA's Tribute to Woman – Creative Artist of the Year Award; Phoenix College – Alumni of the Year; Phoenix College – Living Legend Award; Arizona Governor's Mentoring Award; Phoenix Human Relations Commission Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Living the Dream Award; Phoenix Black Community's Quiet Hero Award; ASU students' Nzinga Award; and BlackpoetVentures' Angaza Award.

She was named "Best Goddess of the Sisterhood" in the New Times Best of Phoenix 2009 edition for her work with women and girls.

Akua Duku Anokye, Associate Professor of Africana Language, Literature, and Culture in the Division of Humanity Arts and Cultural Studies (HArCS) of Arizona State University's New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences. She is the Associate Director of HArCS, past chair of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), and co-chair of the College Board's Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Development Committee.

A sociolinguist, Dr. Anokye's research focuses on African Diaspora orality and literacy practices, folklore, discourse analysis, and oral history with a specialization in Ghanaian culture, religion, storytelling, and dance. Among her publications are essays "Oral Connections to Literacy" in *Journal of Basic Writing*, "Private Thoughts, Public Voices: Letters from Zora Neale Hurston" in *Women: A Cultural Review*, "Centering the Margins: Language and Learning Styles for Composition 2000" in *Attending to the Margins*, and "Go Back and Fetch It: A Method for Decoding Text" in *The Subject is Reading*. Her book, *Get It Together: Readings About African American Life* is an anthology of interdisciplinary readings that provide historical context for issues in the African American Experience.

She is currently working on two book projects; the first is *The Coon has Run a Long Time*, a discourse analysis of a set of folk narratives collected by Zora Neale Hurston in the 20's and 30's, and the second is *Nana Esi and Other People's Children* about a Ghanaian ancestress/deity who serves as archetype for African Diaspora women's literature and community mother activists. Dr. Anokye has received several grants for her work in Ghana, on Nana Esi.

Dr. Anokye's real joy, however, is sharing the stories of the Akan folk hero, Ananse the Spider. She has performed these stories in large and small venues including, Brooklyn Academy of Arts, Carnegie Hall and The National Museum of History in New York City, Tulane University in New Orleans, LA, at the Association of Independent Schools in Africa conference in Nairobi, Kenya, and at the Ghana National Cultural Centre for Arts in Kumasi, Ghana.

Imani S Muhammad MA/MFCC

Imani brings 30 years of experience as an Educator, Trainer, Lecturer, Private Consultant and Administrator to her powerful, innovative approach to Mental Health Therapy.

As Mental Health Administrator with the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections for Juvenile Boys and Girls with Mental Health issues, she honed her skills as an innovative therapist with proven expertise in Rehabilitating Violent and Aggressive youth. Her responsibilities included supervising the New Specialized Treatment Programs for juvenile violent offenders. Her innovative approach received national recognition from the justice community for her success in rehabilitating juvenile offenders.

Imani has a noteworthy history of working successfully with youth and adults at every educational level from primary to college. She has also established Independent Alternative Schools for grades K-12. Additionally she co-developed and facilitated The Success Orientation Seminar a training program for youth and teachers in Violence Interruption, piloted in the Paradise Valley School District.

Imani co-authored the Jumpstart Program designed to teach students how to manage anger, self-discipline and emotional control. A program targeted for youth who display violent and aggressive behavior. Imani has received national recognition from school districts and charter schools for her innovative approach to designing programs that target students and parents alike.

Imani Currently facilitates Violence Interruption Training and Parent Involvement Programs for Community Organizations and Schools. Imani also Facilitates Women's groups that address Social, Spiritual and Mental Health issues.

Biography of Reverend Karen Yearwood

Karen Yearwood was born and raised in Boston, Massachusetts and currently resides in Phoenix, Arizona.

She has many years of experience in the corporate world, where she held various managerial positions in the areas of Finance, Human Resources and Social Services. Karen is currently employed as a Regional Director with First Things First- an organization whose mission is to ensure that children begin their school years healthy and ready to learn.

In addition to her work in the business community, Karen has always been active in the religious arena. For many years, Karen was an active member of Pentecostal Tabernacle in Cambridge, MA. She held many positions in the church and was the founder of the Pentecostal Tabernacle Food Pantry and served as its Director for several years. In 2003, Karen was ordained as a minister. She was employed by the church for five years as the Administrative Pastor. In this capacity, she was responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the church, coordinating the activities of the Leadership Team as well as preaching and teaching.

Since relocating to Phoenix, AZ, Karen is now an active member of Tanner Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church. Karen continues to serve the church by preaching and teaching the adult Church School class.

Karen holds a BA in English from Wellesley College; a Master's in Business Administration from Boston University and a Master's in Divinity from Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. Her desire is to use her skills, educational background, and work experience to help others reach their full potential.