

## *Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. Press Release*



### *Dehkontee Artists Theatre Inducts Catholic Bishop Andrew Karnley of Cape Palmas Diocese as Patron*



*His Lordship Right Reverend Andrew Jagaye Karnley, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Cape Palmas making remarks shortly after his induction as Patron of the Honorable Body of Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc.*

The Honorable Body of Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. (DATI) officially inducted the Catholic Bishop of Cape Palmas Diocese, Right Reverend Andrew Jagaye Karnley as Patron today, October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020. The event took place at the Catholic Secretariat in Harper City, Maryland County, Southeastern Liberia. The Catholic Prelate is the fourth distinguished African/Liberian statesman to be honored as Patron in the forty-three-year history of this distinctive collegiate cultural and educational organization.



*Some members of DATI Gbenelue Chapter posing with the honoree after his induction ceremony.*

Bishop Karnley was accompanied by members of the Cape Palmas Diocese Secretariat including Reverend Father Joe Tugbeh, Assistant Education Coordinator, Ms. Janice M. Walloh, Finance Officer, and Mr. Thomas B. Mawolo, Sr., Regional Coordinator of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (JPC).

#### *Criteria for Conferral of Distinctive Title*



*Bishop Karnley participates in biting the*

The decision to confer the distinctive title of “Patron” on His Lordship Bishop Karnley is based on his humble and astute leadership style as a youthful leader of the Catholic Church in Southeastern Liberia. Over the decades he distinguished himself as a man of peace and justice in Liberia, and as a mentor of Liberian youths. Consequently, the leadership of DATI deemed he met the moral and intellectual standards and benchmarks to mentor Liberian youths who are devoted to and engaged in peacebuilding with the DATI Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia. Against this backdrop, Bishop Karnley has now joined the league of several past distinguished African statesmen including Sierra Leone's former First Vice President S.I. Koroma, Liberia's

President William R. Tolbert, Jr., and Reverend Dr. Jeremiah Walker, Past President of the Liberia Baptist Alliance.

***The Induction Ceremony of His Lordship Bishop Andrew Jagaye Karnley***



***DATI Gbenelue Chapter General Secretary Antonio LeRoy Nimely takes photos during induction program.***

The auspicious induction and cultural ceremony and rite were jointly conducted by officers and members of both the Montserrado (Doughbor) and Maryland (Gbenelue) Chapters of Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. in Liberia. The Executive Director and Founder, Dr. Joe Gbaba, also participated virtually from the United States. DATI's national leadership was headed by Statesmen Hillaryson Soe, Jr., Regional Director for Southcentral, Northern and Western Liberia. He was accompanied by Henry Garjay Brumskine, DATI's Director of Montserrado and Grand Bassa Counties. The two local DATI officials from Montserrado County participated virtually in the ceremony as well. And, the conduct of the official rite in Cape Palmas was headed and supervised by DATI's erudite Maryland County Director Statesman Meshach Sieh Elliott and his corps of officers and members of the Gbenelue Chapter.

***The DATI Gbenelue Leadership***

The following officers and members of the Gbenelue Chapter were in attendance: Stateswomen Johanna Sackey, Assistant Director for Administration, Edith Neufville (Chaplain) said the opening prayer in Grebo, and Jeanet Toe performed the traditional Grebo kola nut and pepper ritual to induct the Catholic Prelate into the Honorable of Dehkontee Artists Theatre. Others present at the ceremony were Statesmen LeRoy Antonio Nimely, General Secretary, Emmanuel Dio Elliott, Emmanuel Howe, DATI's playwrights-in-training Alfred Jluewehtee Kolgee Nugba, author of the peace drama, "Bah Noo Deh Doh" and Jeremiah Mein Clayea, author of "Bah Teh

Wanna Deh”, Daniel M. Seatine, Advisor to the County Director, Oliver P.K. Griffiths, "DATI's Gbenelue Nightingale", and Master of Ceremonies Amos Archie Daye, II.



During the ceremony, Stateswoman Edith Neufville said the opening prayer. She prayed for peace to prevail in post-genocide Liberian society and for the success of the DATI Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia. Assistant Director Johanna Sackey boosted the occasion with a resounding “Bartee oh Bartee” shout out as everyone in the hall jubilantly and forcefully responded in unison to invoke the presence of Almighty God and the spirits of our traditional forebears in the hall. This was followed by the introduction of the Gbenelue Chapter and Montserrado Chapter members by their County Directors, Meshach Elliott and Henry Garjay Brumskine, respectively.

Oliver P. K. Griffiths, affectionately referred to as “DATI’s Gbenelu Nightingale”, rendered a beautiful musical selection. He led the singing of the Gbenelue Chapter’s theme song called, “Bah Noo Deh Doh” (translated as “Let us be one” in the Grebo language of Liberia), while the members joined in the chorus. Subsequently, the host of the ceremony, DATI Maryland County Director Meshach Elliott took the floor again to elaborate on the rationale for the establishment of the DATI Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia.

### ***Rationale for the Establishment of the DATI Kukatonon Peace Project***

Meshach Elliott explained that during the Liberian genocide children between the ages eight to sixteen were forcibly conscripted as child soldiers and combatants but now the youths of Liberia have resolved never to take up arms to fight any wars for Liberian politicians and warlords. The reason they gave was because they do not want any more bloodshed in Liberia. Instead, they would like to serve as ***Peace Advocates***, to promote peace and reconciliation and national unity among all Liberians by using the rich and diverse cultures of Liberia (dance, music, drama, and literacy). The traditional induction rite was climaxed by sharing kola nuts and pepper to induct

His Lordship Bishop Andrew Karnley as Patron of the Honorable Body of Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc.

### ***Bishop Karnley's Acceptance Speech***

In his acceptance speech, the Catholic Prelate thanked officers and members of DATI for the immense sacrifice and patriotic endeavor they have begun, to promote peace and justice in our beleaguered homeland. He also lauded the youths for their efforts to promote and create cultural awareness and national consciousness among all Liberians at home and abroad. He stated that he now considers himself a member of Dehkontee Artists and he will put his arms around the youths to ensure they succeed in their peace mission.

Bishop Karnley also warmly welcomed and encouraged the youths to collaborate with the Catholic Church's Justice and Peace Commission, to initiate peacebuilding programs in the various communities and parishes and to work along with the Catholic Education Secretariat to establish Dehkontee Artists Theatre in the various Catholic institutions in Maryland County. He believes this will enhance DATI's and the Catholic Church's mission to promote peace and reconciliation and create cultural awareness and national consciousness nationwide.

### ***Dr. Gbaba's Remarks***

Speaking from DATI's headquarters in the United States, Dr. Gbaba thanked the newly inducted DATI Patron for his support and the warm welcome he extended the youths of Liberia and Dehkontee Artists Theatre. Dr. Gbaba Thanked God for the offer Bishop Karnley made for DATI to partner with the Catholic Diocese of Cape Palmas. He emphasized that it is important to engage post-genocide Liberian youths in worthwhile pursuits. In addition, Gbaba stated the offer may also create a conducive teaching and learning environment that is violence free so that they may become forerunners of their own destinies.

Gbaba informed Bishop Karnley that DATI Peace Advocates were among the best of youths in Liberia. He praised them for being very respectful, dutiful, and reliable in the execution of their duties as youth leaders-in-training. DATI's Peace Advocate program is youth centered. It is designed to give youths the opportunity to play leadership roles in their communities. Further, it seeks to provide them more skills and knowledge that they can use to successfully integrate into and meaningfully contribute towards the peaceful maintenance of mainstream post-genocide Liberian society.

In closing, Dr. Gbaba proposed to Bishop Karnley that a meeting be set up soon to work out modalities leading to the establishment of a memorandum of understanding between the Catholic Diocese of Cape Palmas and Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc., to jointly implement the DATI Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia.

***How to Donate to Dehkontee Artists Theatre Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia***

Those who would like to support the DATI Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia may do so by logging on the organization's website: <https://www.dehkonteeartistsheatreinc.com> and click on the "Donate" icon to make a donation. Other means to donate include the following:

1. Via mail: make a money order or cheque payable to  
Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc.  
P. O. Box 143  
Clifton Heights, PA 19018
2. Via DATI Wells Fargo Checking Account #: 3931972677; Routing Number: 055003201;  
Routing Number for wire transfer: 121000248