

DATI Breaking News: Irene Roberts-Gulley Steps up as First Matron of DATI/Rabbi Gbaba Tripartite Anniversary!



When I first approached Irene about the idea to construct the first school of the performing and visual arts in Liberia, she readily bought the idea. She said, "Uncle Joe, I am with you a hundred percent because we need an institution where our history and cultural values can be preserved, taught, and promoted." Therefore, Irene stepping up as the first Grand Matron of the Tripartite Anniversary comes as no surprise from my Bong County sister whose patriotic zeal reminds me of the gallantry of the historic Madam Suakoko of Bong County from where Irene hails.

Like Madam Suakoko, Irene would like her name to be written in the pages of Liberian history and, one of the incentives one gets by donating to the DATI/Rabbi Joe Gbaba Tripartite Anniversary Fundraiser as a **Grand Patron** or **Grand Matron** is that your name will be written on the cornerstone of the completed building of the first school of the performing arts in Liberia.



Irene and her family

In a brief statement, Irene said, "I donated as a Grand Matron not only because I want my name written on the cornerstone of the first school of the performing and visual arts in Liberia, but because we need an institution where our history and cultural values can be taught and preserved. Our children and grandchildren are entitled to know about us and where we come from. Also, most Liberians do not know and appreciate our history and cultural values. This is what is causing us to fight among ourselves. I am with you a hundred percent."



Irene and her guest at DATI's 40th Anniversary at the African Cultural Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 2017.

Irene is not a stranger to me, or my wife, Princess Ariminta and this is not the first time she has donated to Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. (DATI), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization both in the United States and the Republic of Liberia. Irene has donated to Dehkontee Artists Theatre Kukatonon Peace Project in Liberia before and she also attended DATI's 40th Anniversary at the African Cultural Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 2017.

However, prior to meeting Irene and my wife, I first met and knew her late father, Mr. Isaac J. J. Roberts, Sr., when he was a Revenue Collector in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County in Eastern

Liberia in the late 1960s and early '70s. Mr. Roberts was an affectionate surrogate father to me and many others. He was one of those fathers back in the day that fathered every child around him and his late son, Bill, and I were friends. So, Irene is a sister as well.



Visiting with the Gulleys at their home in Delaware

Also, Irene and Princess Ariminta grew up in Gbarnga, Bong County and their parents were friends. She took piano lessons under my mother-in-law, Mrs. Williamette Clarke-Porte and so Irene developed love for the arts at an early age. I met and taught Irene English Composition and English Grammar at Cuttington University in the late 1980s when I served as a Lecturer in the Humanities Division. As a student, Mrs. Gulley was studious and focused on her education. She commuted back and forth from Gbarnga to Suakoko every day to school. Our home was located a few yards away from Cuttington Gate where we could watch commuting student traffic flow in and out of the Cuttington University campus.

On several occasions, I would see Irene walking hurriedly up the dusty road that led to the instruction buildings on Cuttington University campus in the hot scourging dry season sun to attend her afternoon classes and then in the evening she would walk back to Cuttington Gate to catch a cab to return to Gbarnga. I saw in her, resilience and determination to learn, and I scaffolded her in her learning process. Artee always had a smile to go along with her daily struggles, and today, here we are. Irene is a mother of a beautiful daughter named Ikegai, a devoted wife, a professional nurse with a master's degree and she is devoted to saving human lives. Above all, Irene is a humanitarian and a stateswoman who puts her country first!



L: Irene & Ikegai; R: Ikegai and her stepdad, Tom Gulley

Besides, Irene's husband, Tom Gulley, and I met during the heat of the Liberian civil war when he worked as an accountant with Medicines sans Frontiers and I as a social worker long before he met Irene. One characteristic I admired about Tom was his calmness and humility and the way he warmly embraced his compatriots even in the wake of vicious ethnic cleansing. Tom has great ideas when it comes to entrepreneurship and business development. I wish the Liberian government could tap into his wealth of experience. However, I was so happy to learn that both Irene and Tom were husband and wife!



A Dehkontee Artists Theatre production of Joe Gbaba's "The Frogs and Black Snake in Frogsville", staged at the Bowie Center for the Performing Arts

Even though, we are many miles away from attaining our goal of constructing a well-equipped school of the performing and visual arts, yet every drop in the bucket helps. Therefore, we are very grateful to Artee and her family for the generous donation. We thank her from the bottom of our hearts for setting a good example and for challenging all Liberians to step up and support a worthy national cause.

Seats Are Limited: Preserve Your Seat by Making a Payment Today

Save the Date: **December 16, 2023 for
DATI/Rabbi Joe Gbaba
Tripartite Anniversary Fundraiser**



The family, friends, fans, and supporters of Rabbi Joe and Princess Ariminta Gbaba and Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. (DATI), cordially invite you to their Tripartite Anniversary and Fundraiser on:

DATE: Saturday, December 16, 2023

VENUE: Merion Tribute House

ADDRESS: 526 Hazelhurst Avenue, Merion Station, PA 19066

TIME: 6-11 PM

PURPOSE: To generate enough funds, material and moral supports, to construct the first school of the performing and visual arts and center for cultural studies in Liberia.

ADMISSIONS

I. Grand Patrons: \$1,000. (Can be paid in installments when registered with Chief Project Financial Officer, Mrs. Juliana Koffa-Dixon @ julianakd69@gmail.com).

PACKAGE INCLUDES: 1. Photo of the Grand Patron & brief statement of support published in the ad journal; 2. Flashing photos and names of Grand Patrons in the hall during DJ musical interludes; 3. Names of the Grand Patrons to be engraved on cornerstone of the DATI School of the Performing and Visual Arts and Center for Peace and Cultural Studies.

II. Patrons: \$500

PACKAGE INCLUDES: 1. Photo of Patron in ad journal and brief statement of support for the project. 2. Flashing photos and names of patrons during DJ musical interludes; copy of official brochure

III. SUPPORTERS: \$250

Package includes: 1. Flashing Supporters' names during DJ Musical interludes.

IV. GENERAL ADMISSIONS: \$100

Package: A copy of the official Tripartite Anniversary Brochure

V. HOW TO DONATE TO DATI: 1. Via cashapp: \$Josephgbaba (267) 973-1709;

2. Via U.S. postal mail: Send check or money order to:

Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc., P. O. Box 143, Clifton Heights, PA 19018;

3. Deposit your donation in DATI's Wells Fargo

Account # 5730834990; Routing # 031000503;

Domestic Wire Transfer # 121000148; International Transfer #WFBUS65.

There are four categories of admission packages to the Tripartite Anniversary and each of the categories offers some incentives to those who wish to attend the Tripartite Event and/or support the project financially or through moral and material supports.

1. **Grand Patron/Matron** (\$1,000). As a Grand Patron, you get to have your name written on the cornerstone of the school of the performing arts when the building is completed. Your photo is printed in the official brochure of the Tripartite Anniversary, including receiving a certification of appreciation, among others.

2. **Patrons** (\$500) photos and brief statement of support are printed in the official brochure of the Tripartite Anniversary.

3. **Supporters** (\$250) will be acknowledged for their staunch support over the decades during the program.

4. **General Admissions** (\$100)

How to Donate

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2. Via U.S. Postal Service: Write check or money order to: Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc., P. O. Box 143, Clifton Heights, PA 19018
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