

DATI Tripartite Anniversary at The Merion Tribute House December 16th, 2023: Reserve Your Seats Now!



DATI Tripartite Anniversary Update

Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. (DATI) is inviting family and friends to celebrate 46 years of existence since it was established at the University of Liberia in 1977. **DATI is launching a fundraiser to generate funds to construct the first school of the performing and visual arts in Liberia. DATI is a 501(c)(3) African-centered cultural and educational organization. Any donations made is tax-deductible.**

We encourage you to kindly donate to our national project. You will receive an official email from DATI once you make payments via any of the payment methods listed on the flyer of the DATI Tripartite Anniversary. See flyer below:

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

The family, friends, fans, and supporters of Rabbi Joe and Frances Aronson Gbaba and Delaware Actors Theatre, Inc. (DATI), cordially invite you to their Tripartite Anniversary and Fundraiser on:

DATE: Saturday, December 16, 2023.

VENUE: Meriton Tribute House

ADDRESS: 526 Hazard Avenue, Meriton Station, PA, 19058

TIME: 6-11 PM

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

ADMISSIONS:
 1. Grand Patron: \$1,000. (Can be paid in installments when registered with Chief Project Financial Officer, Mrs. Julian Koffy-Dean @ juliankoffy@gmail.com)

PACKAGE INCLUDES: 1. Photo of the Grand Patron & brief statement of support published in the all issues; 2. Framing photos and names of Grand Patrons in the hall during 03 musical interludes; 3. Name of the Grand Patron to be engraved on cornerstone of the DATI School of the Performing and Visual Arts and Center for Peace and Cultural Studies;
 1). Patron: \$500

PACKAGE INCLUDES: 1. Photo of Patron in all journal and brief statement of support for the project; 2. Framing photos and names of patrons during 03 musical interludes; copy of official brochure

10. SUPPORTERS: \$250
 Package includes: 1. Framing & supportive names during 03 Musical interludes.

10. GENERAL ADMISSIONS: \$100
 Package: A copy of the official Tripartite Anniversary Brochure

10. HOW TO DONATE TO DATI: 1. Via online: Monrovia@delawareactors.com (607) 979-7106
 2. Via U.S. postal mail: hand check or money order to:
 Delaware Actors Theatre, Inc., P.O. Box 142, Clifton Heights, PA 19018,
 3. Deposit your donation in DATI's Wells Fargo
 Checking Account #3711970677, Routing # 053002281

The Sources of My Inspiration to Give Back to Liberia



I was born at the Barclay Training Center (BTC), the Armed Forces of Liberia army barracks in Monrovia, the capital city of Liberia. My late uncle, General George Solah Wiles, Sr., was a private in the Liberian army. It was approximately ten years after President William V.S. Tubman took power from the Monrovia elites who were still well situated but that were very jealous of Tubman's growing popularity with the indigenous people of Liberia. Tubman was the people's man. At times "Bor Shad", as he was commonly known and called, he would be seen in Old Kru Town visiting his humble friends and building rapport with ordinary folks.



The BTC army barracks was named in honor of President Arthur Barclay because it was during his administration that the Liberia Frontier Force (LFF) was established in 1908. It was established to protect Liberia's frontier borders with the French colonies in the east (Ivory Coast) and north (Guinea), and the British colony in the west (Sierra Leone) and to prevent those world powers from further encroaching on Liberia's territorial rights. Later, the LFF was renamed Liberia National Guard (LNG), and then Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL).

I grew up among disciplined and patriotic Liberians who laid down their lives to defend the Constitution of Liberia and to protect lives and properties within the territorial confines of the Republic of Liberia. The AFL soldiers inspired me to be patriotic and law-abiding. In addition, both my mother, Princess Gbeh-Nyennonh-Garh, commonly called Ma Garh, and my stepdad, Thomas Sackor, they were also disciplinarians and great patriots. They taught me to give back. Later, my adopted parents, General Wilmot and Amanda Stubblefield, would introduce me to the teachings of Christ and instill in me the fear of God and how to gain his wisdom. In addition, another uncle, General Joseph Boima Barclay, Sr., encouraged me to be courageous and self-confident and my adopted dad, Matthew W. Tweh, Sr., was my lifetime guidance counselor.

What My Childhood Days Were Like



As children growing up in Monrovia, the melting pot of Liberian and global cultures, "**Country vs Congau**" was least of our concerns. We socialized freely across ethnic settings and, we did not even know the ethnicity of our classmates or friends. We became friends in school and in our neighborhoods not because of ethnic connections but because we loved one another as human beings and as friends. We played, ate together, and spent time in one another's homes, and we lived as family members, and not just as friends.



A photo from DATI's 40th Anniversary at African Cultural Center in Philadelphia, PA.

The DATI Tripartite Anniversary is a celebration of our rich and diverse history and culture. It seeks to orientate Liberians to accepting and loving one another as brothers and sisters and compatriots. The organizers of the Tripartite Anniversary are laying the groundwork regarding how Liberians and friends of Liberia can preserve and promote Liberia's history and culture through the performing and visual arts and literacy nationally and globally. The project is being organized by patriotic Liberians and Americans who are not asking what Liberia can do for them

but what we can do for Liberia. Therefore, we are asking you to join us on ***Saturday, December 16, 2023, at the Merion Station House, 526 Hazelhurst Avenue, Merion Station, PA 19066, from 6-11 PM, to lend your support and to donate to a worthy national and international cause.*** Even if you are unable to attend, please be kind as to send your donation through one of our payment methods. Your name will be registered in our donor's database. ***Please note that the event will commence at sharp 6 PM!***

Efforts Made by Patriotic Liberian Statesmen to Preserve and Promote Liberian Culture



The Kendeja Cultural Village prior to demolition in 2008

Back in the day, there were some great and farsighted Liberian statesmen the likes of Honorables E. Reginald Townsend, T. Nelson Williams, Sr., Bai T. Moore, Sr., Tankanba Jankanba, and Mr. Lewis, that made efforts to promote and preserve Liberian history and culture so that it would not get drowned in western culture or become extinct. They foresaw this problem growing like cancer cells and acted swiftly and efficiently to address the large influence of western lifestyle over our Liberian cultural beliefs and values. In 1964, Kendeja, a Liberian cultural village, was established to promote and preserve Liberian history and culture.



A Krahn war mask

Kendeja was the national cultural shrine of Liberia. Various traditional Liberian artists and cultural experts from all ethnic groups of Liberia lived there and they worked together for

decades to exhibit Liberian history and cultural values. It symbolized our oneness as a nation and people because residents of Kendeja were traditional Liberian cultural experts that helped us preserve our authentic Liberian cultural beliefs, customs, and values. Kendeja was a symbol of inclusion and national unity in the Liberian society. The National Cultural Center (NTC) bonded all Liberians as one nation and people whose cultural diversity was celebrated and that made every Liberian ethnic group feel appreciated and represented.



The Liberian National Cultural Troupe at Kendeja

Kendeja was also our national pride because of the National Cultural Troupe. It was a sensation on the international cultural stage. The National Cultural Troupe won many international accolades for Liberia, such as in 1966 when the Troupe participated in first World Negro Arts Festival in Dakar, Senegal. This was the first major cultural festival staged in Africa during the independence era of the 1960s, a time when many African countries were being formed as the colonial period came to an end.

Attack on the History and Culture of Liberia in 2008



Photo of the RKL Kendeja Resort Hotel for which Kendeja National Cultural Village was demolished.

Even though the war in Liberia did much to throw us behind God's back, yet one of the worst things that also ever happened to Liberia and Liberians during the civil upheaval is the attack on the culture and history of Liberia, namely, the closure of the Kendeja Cultural Village. The land of the National Cultural Center at Kendeja was sold and the cultural center was bulldozed for the construction of the exclusive RKL Kendeja Resort Hotel run by African American billionaire

Robert “Bob” L. Johnson. The decision was made and taken by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in 2008.

The closure of the Kendeja National Cultural Center nailed the last nail on the coffin and shut down national efforts to preserve and promote Liberian history and culture. It created a state of disconnectedness and a lack of a sense of belonging among Liberian citizens at home and abroad. Presently, Liberia does not have a cultural center that it can boast of and/or to refer researchers and tourists to if they want to study Liberian history and culture or to be entertained.

Further, the sale and demolition of Kendeja brought added darkness and curse upon the Liberian nation because traditionally, it is an abomination to tear down a sacred cultural shrine of a nation and people. Honorable Bai T. Moore, Sr. who was one of the pillars for the preservation of Liberian history and culture may be one of those rolling in his grave today and pondering on what kind of country and what manner of people Liberians are.



Rabbi Gbaba

Also, there are other consequences that come along with the closure of Kendeja, such as the destruction and extinction of our cultural beliefs and norms. For an example, most present-day Liberian children are born with English as their mother's tongue and most of them cannot speak their indigenous languages, even including those born in the hinterland of Liberia. Consequently, indigenous Liberian languages are gradually becoming extinct. Thus, due to lack of national cultural identity and national consciousness, Liberians are also adopting different behaviors and mannerisms that are not native to Liberian history and culture.

'Mis-Education' of Liberian Citizens

To make matters worse, the national curriculum of Liberia is one-sided. It lays emphasis on teaching Liberian pupils western culture than it does teaching indigenous Liberian history and culture. For this reason, most Liberian pupils are educated to think western instead of being educated to think and act like Africans/Liberians, and love Africa/Liberia and themselves as Liberians and Africans. In addition, the aftermath of such a national curriculum and educational system is what Carter G. Woodson (1933) termed as "**The Mis-Education of the Negro.**" Against this backdrop, the Liberian educational system manufactures or '**mis-educates**' Liberian 'intellectuals' who know nothing about their own history and culture and country, but they can give you a two-week lecture on Europe and America by heart!

Furthermore, establishing a school of the performing and visual arts is timely and it is direly needed in Liberia. It will be a great investment that will benefit all Liberians and help to preserve indigenous Liberian languages and culture. We can conduct cultural and historical research and offer Liberian languages as credit courses and grant degrees in Liberian languages and culture (music, dance, artistry) in our schools, universities and colleges. This may help to educate us to know we are one people and it may also create cultural awareness and instill national consciousness within Liberians so that our culture and history may not disappear from the face of the earth.

Rabbi Prince Joseph Tomoonh-Garlodeyh Gbaba, Sr., Ed. D.

Executive Director, Dehkontee Artists Theatre, Inc. (DATI).

August 29, 2023