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**Editor:** Dr. Jean-Claude Dutès  
**Layout Editor:** Maggy Moise-Thomas

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Please e-mail questions or comments to the HNGD:  
**Info@hngd.org**

**Zanmi Detroit**  
**Haitian Network Group of Detroit**  
60 East Milwaukee  
PO Box 2106  
Detroit, MI 48202  
  
**WWW.HNGD.ORG**

# Zanmi Detroit

## EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue commemorates the 10th anniversary of the 2nd and, perhaps, the most destructive natural disaster that the republic of Haiti has ever experienced. Our task today is not only to pay respect and honor all of those who perished and or were injured in the disaster, but also to remember and bring back the spirit of international and national cooperation that helped Haiti survive the initial blow.

The dead have been buried, the injured treated and the rubbles have been removed. The tents have disappeared, the streets cleared, and a few governmental buildings rebuilt. The wound was too deep to heal in a decade, however. As a boxer who has been stunned by an unforeseen punch to the head, Haiti went down and has stumbled up at the count of 10. Staggering, yes, she is up, still in the fight, but confused, bewildered and overwhelmed. The blow against a weakened core had been vicious and its nefarious effects more pervasive than first realized. More work still awaits all of those who can and care to join the rebuilding struggle.

We must not forget, nor can we afford to be complacent. The challenges are there, the prize of a recovered, thriving and vibrant Haiti is attainable, while not seeming within our grasp just yet. More work is needed, more effort must be invested into harnessing our individual resources into a collective will and a new vision of an inclusive and dignified Haiti.

The prize is a Haiti that thrives, one that has been able to parlay its tremendous human potential into resources for a wealthy Haiti as magnificent as king Henry I had dreamed of and dared to build. For my Haitian brothers and sisters, let's us stop the practice of leveling down our standards. Let us, instead, raise our sight and shift our focus on thriving instead of surviving. We have done wonderful things and taken greater risks in the past; we can and must do so again, no matter the odds, to avoid becoming just a footnote in the history of humankind.

Dr. Jean-Claude Dutès, Editor  
Clinical Neuropsychologist ■

## IN THIS ISSUE...

*"Brevity is the soul of wit and tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes."*  
*William Shakespeare*



Today, we will be brief: our focus is on the 10th anniversary of the 2010 earthquake that devastated significant portions of Haiti. In the main section titled "WE REMEMBER," we reproduce an edited version of a speech given nearly 10 years ago as an homage to its victims and give voice to the memories and impressions of various community members.

As for the other sections, you will find a tribute to Professor Guérin Montilus, who has been tiresome in his effort to educate us and the larger Michigan/Detroit community about the roots of Haitian culture. You will read about Dr. Aixa Marchand's whereabouts, learn about our recent graduate, revisit the 20th anniversary party, relive the excitement of Mitch Albom's fundraiser event and become acquainted with interesting, if apocryphal, anecdotes about King Henry I, Haiti's only king and, perhaps, most effective ruler. Lastly, the US Census Bureau reminds us of the importance of being counted.

Jean-Claude Dutès, Ph.D.  
Editor ■

## PRESIDENT'S NOTES

### 2020 AND BEYOND...

*By Maggy Corkery*



We closed the year with HNGD's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration surrounded by friends, colleagues, supporters and community members.

In the grand scheme of things two decades do not seem much, but for those of us who have been with HNGD when it started as a monthly social gathering, to see it transformed into a full fledged non-profit organization and a beacon for the Haitian community in Metro Detroit, it is quite a thrill!

While I cannot speak to what this organization will look like in the next 20 years, I can assure you that we, the current board, will not rest on our laurels. With our gaze fixed on Haiti, we will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that HNGD remains relevant to the Haitian community and that we stay true to the organization's mission of education, inclusion and networking with the community at large.

2019 marked a new milestone in HNGD's journey; however, it did not occur by happenstance. This milestone is the culmination of years of connections, friendship and community togetherness. The organization's success is everyone's success!

HNGD is what it is today because of the involvement and support of many individuals and entities: the organization's founders, all the former HNGD officers, our sponsors and collaborators that have helped us carry our vision throughout the years, and the volunteers and staunch allies too numerous to name one by one who have also played a vital role in keeping the organization alive.

With that kind of backing Haitian Network Group of Detroit will continue to thrive! The work that we do is more relevant than ever, and we will not remain idle in 2020. We are determined to approach the challenges that the New Year will bring with the same determination, focus, and willingness to innovate, that have served us so well in the past. As we continue this journey with you, our faithful supporters, we are looking forward to a year filled with plenty of opportunities to support our community, celebrate our successes and broaden our horizon!

**Happy and Prosperous New Year...! ■**

## WE REMEMBER



### WE SHALL NEVER GIVE UP!

*"Celui qui oublie s'égare et se perd à jamais dans le labyrinthe de son propre passé, retraçant toujours les chemins déjà parcourus." The one who forgets is forever lost in the recesses of their own past, always going over the same paths.*

**Dr. Jean-Claude Dutès**

May we never forget, and may we have the wisdom to let our past be the compass to guide us in creating better tomorrows. In hope of keeping our memory alive in a continuing effort to learn from our moments of glory and humiliation, victory and defeat and pride and shame, and in homage to those who perished or were in any way injured or harmed by the earthquake, I humbly invite you, through the speech below, to join me in remembering and reflecting on the events of January 12, 2010. The speech was given at a memorial event held by Mr. Fritz Monplaisir, former president and founding member of HNGD, on February 19<sup>th</sup> of that fateful year at the African American Museum in Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A.

Good evening fathers and mothers, uncles and aunts, and brothers and sisters, sons and daughters.

It is with a heavy and sad heart and profound respect and humility that I stand here today in solidarity and sympathy for the loss that we all have suffered on January 12, 2010, the second such disaster to hit Haïti in 178 years. I am sure almost anyone here has lost a close family member, a relative, a friend or knows of someone who has. If you did not lose someone, you probably have a family member, a relative or a friend who is homeless. The scope of the disaster is beyond my imagination. It is numbing. I am still in a state of shock and I feel a chill come over me whenever I think about what has happened and what it means. The magnitude of the catastrophe seems to worsen by the day.

On February 10, in an internet article published by AlterPresse, Professor Suzy Castor reported: 200,000 dead, 250,000 injured, 4000 physically mutilated, 1.5 million people homeless, 500,000 displaced and millions psychologically traumatized. In the same medium, the next day Mr. Ronald Colbert reported: 212,000 dead, 300,000 injured, 4000 amputated, 1.3 million displaced. As of February 15<sup>th</sup>, the New York Times reported upwards of 230,000 dead.

This time the earthquake affected the nerve center of Haïtian life, affecting our largest city, the capital city of Port-au-Prince, with an exemplary absence of discrimination. The New York Times describes its impact as "an equal opportunity leveler."

How does one cope with such disastrous events? Where does one find the courage to move forward? Below we offer examples involving Haïtians, but the traits and qualities described are inherent in our brain's ability to adapt and not exclusive to

**Continued on next page**



any human group. As Haiti and Haitians have been most maligned generally by the international press, often presented in demeaning and disparaging terms, here we have an opportunity to highlight, Haitians' responses to adversity in a different light.

A lady of means, who survived, recalled thinking, while she lied in her bed face down praying and waiting to die, that this time she was hoping that "God would be fair and not target only the poor in Haïti." She told me she was thinking of the 4000 people who died after hurricane Jeanne in Gonaïves in September 2004, of the massive damage caused by the flood in May of the same year in Fond Verrettes, where the poor and disadvantaged were disproportionately affected. She told me she saw in the catastrophe a message for all Haïtians, especially those with means, to treat others regardless of economic status, class or color, as they would like to be treated.

In those words, I heard spirituality, the framing and organizing of a painful experience to better deal with it. Since then she has been clamoring not for more effective institutions but for "Haïtians to change from their heart." As she explained, institutions are made by and of men, and if their hearts are not pure the institutions cannot be pure, that is, they will not do what they were supposed to do.

Clearly, she was seeing the catastrophe as a catalyst for personal change, as celestial chastisement that she hoped would lead to personal and then to national transformation. To close our conversation, she looked at me for a long time and said, "Bondye bon, Bondye jist, Li konn sa lap fè." God is good, God is just, and He knows what he is doing.

This lady, one of the displaced people in Haïti who sustained considerable material loss and experienced significant psychological trauma, was already active in putting the experience to use in the rebuilding effort. Whether one agrees or rejects her interpretation, the point is about how she was coping with the tragedy. Here, to me was an example of the use of spirituality as a mean of coping with adversity. In it we see how God is used to restore a sense of order and personal control in response to uncontrollable an overwhelming external event. We also see in that example the ability to positively frame an experience and use it to guide one's thinking and actions. Although distressed, sad and distraught by a brush with her own mortality, she was not broken.

A colleague in Haiti providing humanitarian relief posted the following after an encounter.

"Please find my nephew, if you can...he is a smart student—attending University and planning to be a doctor someday—a fine young man... his mother is worried sick. Please find him...please have him call..." This is what greeted me within minutes of arriving at Miami International Airport, after the kindly middle-aged Haïtian woman driving the cab found out the purpose of my trip to Haïti. As we stopped at my hotel, she scribbled down her phone numbers and email, said a quick prayer and wiped away tears. She thrust the paper

into my hand, clasping me briefly in her large, warm grasp. She peered at me with sad yet hopeful eyes and thanked me profusely for my willingness to help. I found myself feeling awkward and powerless, with a mist starting to form in my eyes. I blinked my unexpected teariness back, and softly told her that I would do my best, but I could not assure her of an ability to find him. She grasped my hand again and let me know that she just was grateful for being able to give her message to someone — the rest was "up to God."

Here we have another aspect of resilience and a perfect example of what Americans would call "nothing tried, nothing gained" and Haïtians refer to "mache chèche pa dòmi san soupe." Here what you have is unbridled optimism, a manifestation of the importance of family ties, a reflection of the value of children and importance of education and the power of having a connection to a higher power. Many people see Haïtians reliance on religion as a form of fatalistic passivity, but this is incorrect from a psychological point of view. They are confusing patience with passivity. As was the case with the Haïtian lady, she did what she could, given the situation and let it go. With someone else and a different set of circumstances she would have done something different. What we see here is the ability to take risk and be resourceful to the extent that the situation allowed. Having done what she could, she left it up to God whom she believed would continue to work on it, just as she would continue the process of generating new options or possibilities.

These two examples show us that spirituality, decisiveness and action are inherent in the manner Haïtians respond to adversity.

This morning while listening to NPR, I heard a story that spoke to the resourcefulness of the Haïtian spirit. A young woman named Yvrose Jean Baptiste lost almost everything she had. Within days after the earthquake she was actively engaged in running what was left of her business. She was found carrying a huge tub on her head in which there were 30 lbs of chicken necks.

Asked whether the tub was heavy, she said that it was, but that she had no other choice because she had children to feed and also lost her home. Yvrose is a small-scale wholesaler. She borrows \$100.00 from a micro bank to finance her business. Every 15 days she goes to the Dominican Republic to purchase merchandize, which she sells on credit to local retailers who pays her with interest after they have sold the goods. She took her last trip to the Dominican Republic the day before the quake. Since then, all ten of her consumers have lost everything and some have even died. She did not know what she was going to do since she must make a payment on her loan the next day. With a fifth-grade education she engaged in sophisticated financial transactions involving interest and currency exchange rates and accounting, and by all accounts she was successful before the quake.

I knew a student in college while I lived in New York who

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Dr. Montilus with Dr. Ollie Johnson (on his left), Chair of WSU Department of African American Studies and colleagues



Dr. Montilus with Dr. Jorge Chinaea (on his right) Director of the WSU Center for Latino/a & Latin American Studies, and guests



Dr. Montilus with Dr. Andrea Sankar (on his right), Chair of WSU Department of Anthropology, and colleagues



Starting from left: Fritz Momplaisir, Bernadette O'Neal, Afiavi Montilus, Dr. Montilus, Kauovi Montilus, Dr. Nelson



Starting from left: Bécél Dubreauze Jr., Dr. Montilus, Dr. Eric Montgomery, Rosario Danier





graduated from the top 5% of his class in high school. When he got to Hunter College, he found that his academic preparation was less than adequate as compared to his fellow students who had gone to better schools. When he attempted to read the school newspaper, he was lost, for he did not read the books, saw the movies or the plays that some of the articles referred to. Realizing his lags, he was determined to catch up. He went to his teachers, explained the situation and sought from them a list of readings and other suggested resources. Over the next year, while carrying fifteen credits, he worked hard to catch up and he caught up, graduating and going on to complete a doctorate.

In both above examples is a demonstration of hardiness and resourcefulness; a refusal to internalize helplessness and an ability to appraise situations quickly and take adaptive actions. In both cases neither person was afraid of working hard. To them it was automatic, they did what they had to do. We also see in both cases the ability to be flexible, to bend to the needs of the moment in order to surmount it. There is no time for indulging in emoting, although emotions are neither suppressed nor denied. My friend felt a sense of shame at the initial ability to measure up, but it did not cause him to believe that he was not as smart as the other students. Both he and Yvrose had what psychologists called a high level of coping self efficacy, that is, the belief that they are capable of overcoming adversity, even though, as can be seen in Yvrose's case, she did not yet know what she was going to do about the loan. As a neighbor of mine, "vwazen" Antoine, used to say "Ti Ayisyen pat bat blan Franse kouche sou do yo" or Haïtians did not defeat Napoleon's army laying on their backs.

I could keep on going but you get the idea. Haïtians are spiritual, resourceful, flexible and hardy, and yes resilient, unlike what you hear and see in the media. Materially, we are the poorest in the western hemisphere we are told repeatedly; never that we are the first and only people to have defeated slave owners. To do that I suppose would be to remind too many powerful and comfortable countries of the source of their ill-gotten wealth and material comfort. However, just because we are not wasteful does not make us daft.

As someone has said about our country before, Haïti is rich in human resource. Yet paradoxically, Haïti is also a broken state. It has not been as resilient as its individual citizens. As a nation state it does not take care of its people. There are many reasons for this that we don't have time go into now.

But one thing is clear, things must change. This is a time not only to honor our dead but one for reflection and meditation. And for change to occur... we must dream about the desired change, as dreaming is to the brain what turning the ignition on is to a car. And yes, to paraphrase an illustrious brother whose dream moved a nation, I have a dream too.

I dream of a Haïti that is the symbol of the indomitable spirit of all oppressed peoples' striving for freedom and liberty.

I dream of a Haïti where friends from all corners of the world would come to seek the comfort of our warmth, be soothed by the caresses of our cool mountain winds, nurtured by our delicious meals and revel in the sounds and rhythm of our music.

I dream of a Haïti where children would only walk a mile to school instead of six or eight.

I dream of a Haïti where parents could provide for their children so that our children would no longer be the target of predatory orphanage builders in quest of a quick buck under the pretense of helping children.

I dream of a Haïti where all children would have a meal before leaving for school, a lunch in the afternoon and a meal at night.

I dream of a Haïti where no children would be distracted from learning by the groaning and the pain in their stomachs.

I dream of a Haïti that is a sanctuary against the caprices of Mother Nature instead of being her casualty.

I dream of a Haïti where the educated would use their knowledge to lift the uneducated instead of using their education to keep them mired in ignorance.

I dream of a Haïti where the uneducated would not be too embittered and angry by their misfortunes that they would not allow themselves to learn from the ones with formal education and knowledge.

I dream of a Haïti where the formally educated would allow himself to learn from the experiences of those who were not lucky enough to go to school.

I dream of a Haïti where personal achievement and actions are valued higher than family origin, skin color or social class in evaluating a person's character.

I dream of a Haïti where Yvrose Jean Baptiste would go to Mirebalais or Jacmel or Carrefour or anywhere in Haïti to make her purchases.

I dream of a Haïti where Yvrose Jean Baptiste would not have to damage her spine carrying 30 lbs on her head.

I dream of a Haïti where Haïtians would not use the accident of birth as a right to exclude their brothers and sisters from being able to harvest the fruits of the collective effort.

I dream of a Haïti where the wealthy would pay their fair share of taxes just as the poor market women and men.

I dream of a Haïti where the leaders and those in privileged positions would see the benefits of building adequate roads instead of riding in SUV's on poorly built and poorly maintained roads.

I dream of a Haïti where the politicians would work for the



Haitian people instead of for foreign powers.

I dream of a Haïti where the people would walk away from anyone who attempt to sow divisions based on skin color, social class or religion.

I dream of a Haïti where there would be a functional government, sufficient roads to move relief goods, hospitals to treat the injured, and adequate facilities to treat the dead with dignity and respect after the next earthquake.

I dream of a Haïti where all Haïtians would believe that we are our brother's keeper and remember that Mother Nature is an equal opportunity leveler.

I dream of a Haïti where Haïtians from the Diaspora return to Haïti to work with those who never left with respect and mutual appreciation for each other's expertise and skills.

As Morisseau Leroy observed and exhorted us in a 1948 poem there is work to do.

"My friend what is happening?  
The country has changed  
Shoulder to shoulder  
Together we bend  
Together we rise  
For the earth is ours  
I now see a beautiful country  
It is time  
It is the hour  
I am rebuilding my country with the help of my brothers."

I dream of a Haïti where all Haïtians would see in January 12, 2010, a reminder from our ancestors that they had done their part in Vertières on November 18, 1803 to rid us of the external shackles of slavery, and that this earthquake, coming 178 years after the one that destroyed Cap Haïtien on May 7 1942, is a call for drastic personal effort to rid ourselves of the psychological chains of slavery, and through that process transform Haïti into a sanctuary from the vicissitudes of nature.

Haïti is on her back... she is weak, but she is breathing...

As Jacques Stephen Alexis wrote in "Les arbres musiciens", "The trees are cut down from time to time, but the voice of the forest never loses its power."

I dream that we, Haïtians and those who want to be friends of Haïti, are listening.

As the poet Bigaro Diop once wrote:  
"The dead are never gone; they are always with us."

I dream that on this day we resolve to make them proud.

Thank you for your patience and good evening! ■

## THE GLOBAL FAMILY: WE ARE OUR BROTHERS' KEEPERS

*By Maggy Corkery*

On Tuesday January 12, 2010, Haiti was rocked by a 7.0 magnitude earthquake. Among the injured was Pierre Gardy Boncœur, a married 42-year-old businessman. When the tragedy struck around 4:53pm, Gardy's day was just ending and he was in the process of locking up his store on Rue des Casernes. Gardy felt the tremor and as he was trying to escape, the cinder block-made building collapsed. A few streets down, the National Palace, source of pride for Haitians, had suffered the same fate as his store. Gardy remained under the rubbles for what felt like an eternity in an alarming state with a spinal cord injury that left him paralyzed from the neck down. During that time, he was approached by a heteroclite group of strangers: pseudo-Samaritans only willing to help for a price, an escaped prisoner who tried his best to free him from the rubbles and gang members who managed to place him on a makeshift stretcher. After his cousin found him twelve hours later, Gardy experienced three days of constant back and forth rejection from different facilities until he found refuge in Martissant with Doctors Without Borders. He remained there until he was informed that he needed specialized care that they could not provide. Despite the surrounding devastation and chaos, his wife Rose Yolaine Etienne was unharmed. Thanks to her supervisor at the NGO Nos Petits Frères et Sœurs, he was transferred to a pediatric hospital located in Tabarre.

The 2010 earthquake, which lasted less than one minute, was nevertheless the most devastating natural disaster ever experienced in Haiti. Port-au-Prince was the hardest hit. The capital's infrastructure was unable to sustain such a large-scale catastrophe. In a Press Release, then President Obama vowed to "launch a swift, coordinated, and aggressive effort to save lives and support the recovery in Haiti". In March 2010, the White House provided the following update: more than 21,000 U.S. citizens had been repatriated; Disaster Medical Assistance Teams and International Medical Surgical Response Teams from the Department of Health and Human Services had conducted 31,365 patient visits, performed 167 surgeries, and delivered 45 babies; U.S. military medical professionals had treated 9,800 patients, processed 1,464 patient admissions and performed 1,025 surgeries.

On January 20, because of his precarious condition, Gardy was evacuated by a University of Michigan's Survival Flight jet and taken to Ann Arbor. Unfortunately, the damage to his left leg was beyond repair and it had to be amputated. Gardy remained in the Hospital for 6 months until he was discharged to a Nursing Home in the area. Thanks to months of intensive counseling, occupational and physical rehabilitation, he learned to function semi-independently. Many people in Michigan rallied around Gardy to give him as much support as possible and lessen the impact of his multiple losses. Gardy always speaks fondly of these individuals who volunteered their time and services selflessly: Collin and Anna Hardy whom Gardy refers to as his saviors because of "all they have done and continue to do" for him; Jacqueline Pierre who helped with interpretation and hosted his wife many times when she visited him in Michigan; Pierre Richard Lamarre who assisted with his transportation needs; Immigration

Continued on next page



Attorney Hervé Narcisse who provided pro bono legal services; Pastor Kéno! Cadet who gave him the spiritual support he needed to adjust to his new life, while his wife Frida always managed to bring him a taste of Haiti with her succulent home cooked meals; Emmanuel Lamitier who gave him the best haircuts in town; Adeline Auguste, whose thoughtfulness always touched him; and Emmanuel Ngwe from Health Plus Transportation (Ypsilanti) who made sure that Gardy made it to numerous appointments in a timely manner.

Gardy and Rose Yolaine got married on July 25, 2009, just six months before the devastating earthquake! They had decided to adopt an adorable baby girl, Jemima. The adoption became final while Gardy was in Michigan. His wife was granted a visitor's visa allowing her to travel to Michigan from time to time; however, the restrictions imposed by the visa prevented her from remaining on U.S. soil for a long period of time. Despite the fact that his medical expenses were completely covered in the U.S., the family's financial situation took a dive when Rose Yolaine lost her job. In 2017, Gardy was transferred to Heritage Manor Healthcare Center in Flint. Unfortunately, the distance made it more difficult for his friends to visit and provide him things as simple as *yon bon ti lodyans* (informal chat) in Creole or his favorite Haitian dish; this might seem to some as an insignificant detail, but it is so important for someone who was transplanted from his homeland almost a decade ago and in such dramatic circumstances.

Although he is not the man he used to be prior to the earthquake, Gardy stated that he is grateful that he was given "another shot at life". He has adjusted to his physical limitations. Now he can complete certain tasks that are mundane for most of us, but that for him represent a great victory after months of patience and determination: changing his shirt, washing himself from the waist up, feeding himself with specialized utensils and using a tablet or laptop. When he is asked what he thinks his life would have been like if he had remained in Haiti, he stated that he is doubtful that he would still be alive. "I am doubly grateful when I think about the amount of money and resources all this care must cost". The one thing that has not stopped "eating" him up is the fact that he has never been able to see or hold his daughter who is now 10 years old.

After the earthquake, the U.S. announced that an estimated 200,000 undocumented Haitian immigrants living on US soil would be granted asylum under the Temporary Protected Status (T.P.S). T.P.S is a form of humanitarian relief that represents a safe haven for foreign nationals within the United States who may not meet the legal definition of refugee or asylee but are nevertheless fleeing or reluctant to return to potentially dangerous situations in their home countries. Yet, there is a menace in the horizon. TPS is now considered to be a program that has deviated from its original intent. It is supposed to be "temporary" and was never meant to lead to an indefinite stay on American soil. In 2017, the U.S. government initiated a move to terminate Haiti's T.P.S. designation because the conditions related to the earthquake had "greatly improved". For Gardy this meant that he would have to return to Haiti. As luck would have it, the T.P.S. designation for Haiti is still in effect pending the Court's decision on a case recently brought against the U.S. government in response to its decision to terminate Haiti's T.P.S. status. The injunction secured him a valuable reprieve!

However, Gardy is very apprehensive about the idea of having to eventually return to Haiti were there are no facilities equipped to adequately meet his needs. We can only hope that the Court's decision will be favorable to T.P.S beneficiaries so that Gardy can remain here. If that were to come true, perhaps a humane exception could be made to reunite him with his Rose Yolaine and Jemima. ■

Pierre Gardy Boncœur



Picture With Jacqueline Pierre



Picture With Pierre Richard Lamarre



## HAITI MEMORIAL

*By Hervé Leonard*

This year marks 10 years since Haiti suffered the worst catastrophe in its history. Given all the nation has been through in the last 216 years, that is saying something. We have all seen Anderson Cooper's coverage of the devastation in Haiti, unfortunately. The footages we saw on CNN could not summarize my emotionally overwhelming experience "*nan payi mwen*", in my country. The heartbreaking scenes of collapsed hospitals, government buildings in rubble, people young and old lying injured or dead in the street, and a cloud of dust hanging over Port-au-Prince played out like a horrific kaleidoscope. As one survivor had tearfully mentioned to me "*mwen te reelman panse se te 'la fin du monde'!!*" *I really thought the world had ended!*



From what I witnessed in Haiti, as part of a Delegation spearheaded by Congressman John Conyers Jr's office, I came to believe that the bottlenecking of international aid and the UN's poor ability to provide vital assistance are what will continue to kill the survivors of this murderous earthquake.

Despite the tragic events that have rocked this island nation, it is still rich in history, human potential, and human spirit. Haiti was the second nation in the New World to declare its independence, just after the United States. It did so despite greater adversity than we Americans faced—we had to deal with the British, but Haiti's founders at different times stared down the militaries of France, England, and Spain.

I am grateful they did. The central third of the United States—the Louisiana Purchase—became American when Napoleon decided to sell it to Thomas Jefferson, a decision he reached after concluding he could not defeat the brave people fighting in Haiti for their freedom. We must also give thanks for the many contributions that our Haitian ancestors made to our country. We have Jean-Baptiste Pointe Du Sable, who was finally recognized as the founder of Chicago on October 25, 1968. We also have Pierre Toussaint, a free slave from Haiti, who the Catholic Church canonized as the first black saint of America. Both Toussaint and Du Sable were born in Saint Marc, Haiti. We also have Jean-Baptiste Belley, who together with Louis Jacque Beauvais, Henri Christophe, Alexandre Petion, Andre Rigaud and many unknown soldiers from Haiti who fought at Savannah, Georgia during the American Revolution. We must also be thankful for the contributions that our Haitian ancestors made to South America to help Simon Bolivar free the slaves in Venezuela, Columbia, Peru and many other Latin American Countries.

We all have a stake in Haiti's future. In our interdependent world, we are all connected, and the fate of our neighbors is intrinsically linked with our own. Let us remember a stronger, more secure Haiti means a stronger, more secure region. The Haitian people deserve the chance to build a nation that reflects their hard work, their ability, and their desires.



There is a Haitian proverb, "*anpil men, chay pa lou*," which translates as "**many hands lighten the load**." By working together, excelling in academics and staying informed about world issues, we can lighten the load that the Haitian people have carried on their own for far too long, and finally give them a real chance for a better tomorrow.

L'Union fait la force ...there is strength in unity.

Hervé Leonard ■

## REACTIONS TO THE 2010 EARTHQUAKE

**When I heard that Haiti was hit by an earthquake, ... (Fill in the blank)**

"I thought of my uncle being stuck under rubble not being able to get out. I also had fear for a country that would have a hard time rebuilding." **Alain Desvallons-Mentor**

"I immediately panicked; eventually, my faith in God kept me centered and hopeful that my loved one would be OK." **Emmanuel Lamitier**

"I felt my heart drop with sadness especially because my sister, my husband's family and many friends were greatly affected." **Jacqueline Pierre**

"I feared that some people I knew were dead. Much to my continuing sorrow - some were." **Bill McNeece**

"I will never forget the morning I heard about the earthquake in Haiti. I walked out to the kitchen to get my coffee and turned the TV on to watch the news. There was a picture of a map of Haiti on the screen on CNN, with the ticker on the bottom reading Earthquake. It took a moment to sink in. I sat down with growing concern and horror as I heard the news. My adoption dossier had just been accepted by the orphanage and I was thrilled to be moving forward in the process of adopting a little girl from Haiti. The rest of the day was spent hearing the tragic news, and it's only kept getting worse. I kept in touch in close contact with my adoption facilitator throughout the day and she confirmed the depth of the tragedy. I spent the day praying and wondering about the kids at the orphanage and hoping they were all okay. We did learn a few days later that all of the kids and staff were okay. I tell my daughter often that she is an earthquake survivor. And I am a mother because of that." **Jennifer Berkemeier**

*Continued on next page*

“January 12, 2010 is a special day and will remain in my memory forever. Once more, Haiti my native country suffers a terrible disaster. I was in Florida when I heard the news. The phone rang endlessly as friends and family were wondering about the devastation and loss of loved ones still living on the island that fateful day. As time went by it became clear that the destruction and loss of life had reached unthinkable proportions. The power lines were destroyed, and communication was impossible for a couple of days creating a great deal of anxiety and distress. The sight of so much damage deeply saddened me. January 12, 2010. Unforgettable date!!!” **Rose-Marie Jean-Louis**

“One of the hardest days in my life. Made contact with my two sisters and brother in Haiti. None of us could reach my 94-year-old mother who was wheelchair bound and living at her house with two helpers. It was not until late that night that we found that she was safe and spend the night in front of her damaged house. On this tenth anniversary, continued prayers for my beloved country which still in recovery from that awful disaster.” **Janny Magloire Milton**

“At the time I was working at Verizon and when it happened I was attending a companywide function in Orlando. I was so engrossed in my project, that I only heard about it the next day. First, I felt numb and it took some time for the news to sink in; then I felt very helpless until I sprang into action. I found a way to help the folks back home by providing financial support to different relief efforts.” **Rick Noël**

“I felt horrible... Sad...Depressed...Shocked. For days, my reaction was one of utter disbelief. Why us?” **Maxceau Cylla**

“It took me a while to wrap my head around it and grasp the magnitude of the catastrophe. I kept thinking “How will Haiti survive another devastation?”” **Shirley Alc  Konat **

“ My late husband Serge Auguste was in Haiti when it happened. I was shocked because I didn’t know what happened to him.” **Adeline Auguste** ■

## THE GRADUATES



In December of 2019, **Christopher Phanord** completed his Master of Science degree in Clinical Psychology at Eastern Michigan University. Following his remaining interviews later this month, he plans on attending a doctoral program in counseling psychology. ■



## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

### THE END OF AN ERA & NEW BEGINNINGS

*By Aixa Marchand*

On April 1, 2019 my journey at the University of Michigan officially came to an end when I defended my dissertation entitled *Black Parents’ Critical Consciousness: Conceptualization, Measurement, and Links to Parent School Engagement*. This marked the end of my 6 years in Ann Arbor in the Combined Program in Education and Psychology. I defended two years of my independent work in front of a room full of family, friends, colleagues, and 4 members of my committee.



A month later in May, the symbolic end of my years spent in Michigan occurred. Family and friends joined me from 4 different states to attend my commencement, celebrate this accomplishment, and watch my doctoral hooding. The hooding ceremony is a celebration of the successful completion of doctoral studies and is the moment when your dissertation chair(s) place the doctoral hood over your head and onto your shoulders representing the passing of the guard from one generation to the next.



Now that my time in Michigan has officially ended, I have since moved to Memphis, Tennessee and accepted a position as an assistant professor of psychology and educational studies at Rhodes College, a small liberal arts school. Having come from Miami, FL before moving to Michigan, I never thought I would miss it, but I do. I miss Ann Arbor greatly and the community that I found in HNGD. But, the saying is true, there are Haitians everywhere and I have met a fellow first year assistant professor who is a young Haitian woman at the University of Memphis. Anyone want to join us in the warm and sunny south? ■

## 20 YEARS IN THE MAKING

*By Rosario Darnier*

On December 14th, 2019, the Haitian Network Group of Detroit (HNGD) celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> year anniversary. True to form, it was a well-organized and well attended event that captured the imagination and the essence of the group. Through visual presentation and powerful speeches, we recounted our achievements and described the caring nature of our community that contributed to this success.

Surrounded by family, friends and colleagues from Wayne State University, Dr. Montilus was awarded a lifetime achievement Award for his work as anthropologist and a promoter of Haitian Culture. His peers spoke on his behalf and expressed tremendous gratitude not only for his work on religion but his mentorship to many of his colleagues.

The crowd was mixed with Haitian and non-Haitian alike who believe in HNGD cause and mission. We celebrated in style and with humility. We applauded those who supported us over so many years and lavished praise to those in attendance. Our President, Margareth Corkery, laid the vision for the path forward and the necessity for greater participation. We took the time to thank Hervé Léonard, our master of ceremony, Catherine Dauphin and the Board members for getting us to this point. They put together an amazing program that night. Their dedication was felt by the elegance in the room decoration, the level of professionalism and coordination. The event ended with Claude Marcelin performing with Enos Fabre. With the help of our DJ, Huggins Gérard, they held the audience captive and engaged. Everyone was on the floor dancing and reminiscing of the good old days in Haiti.

It was a night to remember. ■

Standing L to R: Emmanuel Lamitier, Rilck Noël, Pierre Richard Lamarre, Robert Shimkoski



Michael Corkery & Shirley Alcé Konaté



Continued on next page

## HONORING DR. GUÉRIN MONTILUS



Although there are many other awards and achievements worth mentioning that will further illuminate the work of this storyteller, professor and mentor, it is Dr. Montilus' passion, his commitment to teaching and learning and his willingness to share his knowledge that will give greater merit to his legacy.

Many of us have been privileged to hear Dr. Montilus recount stories depicting the mythical power of the shapeshifter who can take different forms or the vodou priest who can travel long distance in an instant by sitting on an empty saddle. As a storyteller, he keeps the culture alive and presents it in a place far away from home.

As a professor and mentor, Dr. Montilus has devoted his academic life to learning about different religions and one in particular: vodun. His work in that field has been particularly unique for it counteracts the negative connotations that have been perpetuated about Haitian culture and vodouism.

He has journeyed across Adja in southern Benin, southern Togo and Western Ghana (West Africa), South America and other parts of the Caribbean, particularly Cuba, in a tireless quest to understand the cosmology of African religious expressions. Along the way, he has amassed a personal extensive collection of West African and Caribbean art and religious artifacts exhibited in a Material Culture Laboratory that he has meticulously created.

When the founders of HNGD thought of promoting Haitian culture in the city of Detroit, they could not find a greater mentor to help lead that effort. Dr. Montilus was a board member of the former ESPOIR Haitian American Organization and one of its frequent guest speakers. He has continued that role through his active involvement in ESPOIR's successor, the HNGD. He has never missed an opportunity to educate the public on the value of our rich heritage that contrary to popular belief, includes a mix Taino, French, Spanish and of course, African culture. He has held private events and has been readily available when called upon to share his knowledge. He has been extremely generous in sharing his time and personal resources. His kindness has had no limits. It is in the same spirit of promoting diversity and inclusion and with our greatest respect and admiration that we bestow this award to Dr. Montilus.

***"In recognition of his outstanding, wide-ranging work that spans the study of African religions, material culture and artistic representations, his many contributions to the African diaspora in the U.S., the Caribbean and Latin America, his active engagement with the Haitian community, we the Haitian Network Group of Detroit, the Wayne State University Department of Anthropology, the Department of African American Studies, and the Center for Latino/a & Latin American Studies hereby confer this Lifetime Achievement Award to Dr. Guérin Chapsal Montilus".*** ■

## COMMUNITY COMES OUT FOR MITCH ALBOM'S FUNDRAISER

*By Maggy Corkery*

On November 15, about thirty, HNGD members and supporters attended *Gigs for Digs* at the Detroit Opera House in support one of Mitch Albom's charities. This function was the launching of Mitch's new book *Finding Chika: A Little Girl, an Earthquake, and the Making of a Family*. The book recounts the moving story of a Haitian girl named Chika and how she became a member of the Albom family.

The event was very heartwarming. Mitch read a few passages from the book. The audience also got an opportunity to hear directly from some of the young people who are benefiting from the tremendous work he is doing in Haiti as well as testimonials about Say Detroit's philanthropic work in the City of Detroit. The evening's entertainment lineup included Thornetta Davis, Apropos and Thomas McLary's Commodores.

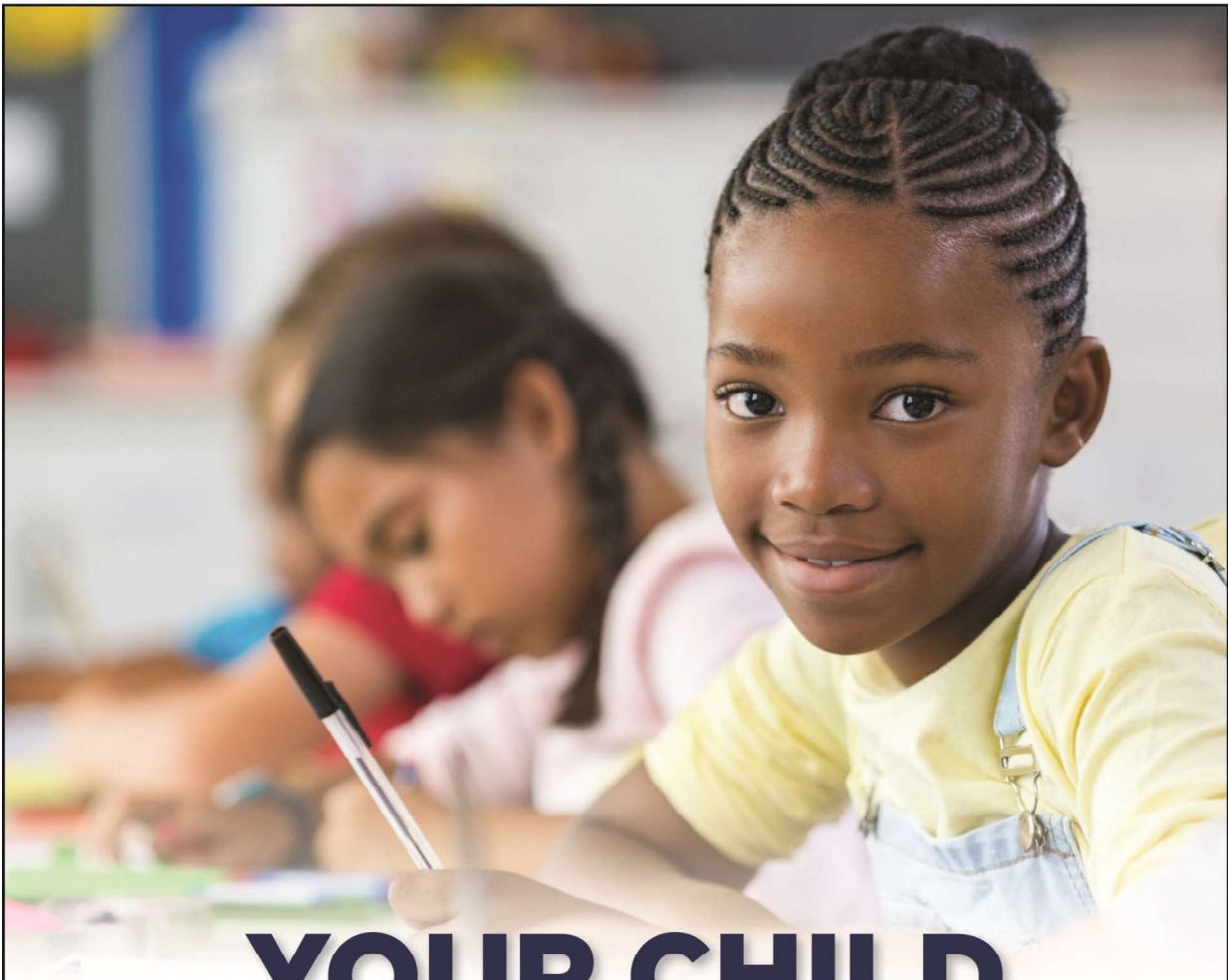
HNGD would like to thank all those who came to the event, particularly Mr. and Mrs. Eric Guilliod and Mr. Nicolas Paul who made the trip from Ohio. A big Mèsi Anpil also goes to those who, even though they could not make it, sent donations to support the cause. For the past 10 years Mitch's orphanage, Have Faith Haiti, has been providing first class care and education to Haitian children. Now over 40 young people call this facility home.

Mitch and his wife Janine have dedicated their life to ensure that these children have a bright future ahead of them. Please keep this exemplary couple in your prayers so they and their support staff can continue the work that they have started, despite the challenges they may encounter due to the current situation in Haiti. ■



From left to right 2<sup>nd</sup> row : Maggy Corkery, Nicolas Paul, Shirley Alcé Konaté and Rudy Rousseau

Front row: Mitch and Janine Albom with Knox who was visiting from Haiti and Stéphanie Rousseau ■



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# CENSUS 2020

## CENSUS 2020: AN INTRODUCTION

*By Hayg Oshagan*  
*Wayne State University*  
*Director of New Michigan Media*



*Hayg Oshagan*

What is the census?

The U. S. Constitution requires that the federal government count every person living in the U.S. The U.S. Census has been conducted every 10 years since 1790.

Why is the Census important?

Every year, the federal government gives money it has collected from taxes back to the states. How much money a state gets depends on how many people live in that state. And the count of how many people live in a state is determined every 10 years by the Census. So if a state has a low Census count, it will get less money from the federal government, every year, for the 10 years after the Census count. Recently, Michigan has gotten about \$30 billion a year based on the 2010 Census. In addition to federal funds, how many representatives a state has in the U.S. Congress also depends on a state's population, which is determined by the Census. Because of a low Census count, Michigan lost a Congressional seat in 2010, going from 15 Congressmen and Congresswomen in the U.S. House of Representatives, to the current 14.

What is the money used for?

The \$30 billion Michigan gets every year is used by the state, used by counties, used by Native American tribes, and used by cities for programs that serve our communities. This is money that funds our kids' **education** (student loans, Pell grants, school lunches and breakfasts, Headstart, school funding), helps with **health care** (Medicare, Medicaid, Urgent Care, children's health insurance/MI Child), is used for **food assistance** (Supplemental Nutrition, Bridge Cards, Meals on Wheels), **housing loans**, **road construction**, **transit**, and any program that helps our communities grow and prosper.

What happens if the count is low?

Michigan, and every county and city in Michigan, gets a lot less money for all the programs the Census pays for. As an example, for Detroit, every person not counted would cost the city \$5,500 every year for 10 years. If 3% of Detroiters don't get counted (about 20,000 people), Detroit would lose \$1 billion over the next 10 years.

Who should be counted?

Everyone. The Census counts everyone who is living in America. It doesn't matter if you are a citizen or not a citizen, if you have a Green Card, or a visitor visa, or an expired visa, a student with an F1 visa or an employee with an H-1b visa, if you live in the U.S., you count for the Census.

The only people not counted are those who are here as tourists, and are planning to return to their home country. Everyone else counts. Make sure to count everyone in your household, including children and newborns. And if you sublet to anyone, you need to count them too.

What is a household?

For the Census, a household is an address. The Census does not have names, it only has addresses. There are about 140 million addresses in the U.S., and the Census is sent to each of those addresses. People who live in groups with a single address (jails, hospitals, nursing homes, school dormitories, etc.) are also counted.

Is the Census confidential?

The United State has a law specifically for the Census, to make sure it is 100% confidential. The Census Act, Title 12, of the United States Code, has the strictest confidentiality laws on the federal books.

The information collected by the Census CANNOT be shared with ANY other agency. It cannot be given to ICE, to the FBI, to Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, the IRS, local police, the sheriff, social service agencies, insurance companies, businesses or anyone. For any reason. And over the last 50+ years, this law has never been broken, not even once.

How many questions are on the Census?

The Census is 9 questions. That's it. And there is no question

*Continued on next page*

about your citizenship or visa status. The Census only cares to know if you live in the U.S.

What comes in the mail?

In the past, the Census was a paper questionnaire. This year, most people will get a card in the mail with a unique ID that you use to fill out the Census online. Where the internet is slow, people will get the paper version to fill out and send back. People can also call in and complete the Census on the phone.

The Census is mailed on March 12. If you don't respond, you will get reminders on March 16, March 23, April 8, and April 20.

Will someone knock on my door?

If you don't send the Census back by the end of April, Census workers will come to your door. They have badges and identification from the Census Bureau, and they will ask you to complete the Census. It is much better to fill it out on your own, and not wait for the Census workers to come by. We get a much better count that way.

We only have one chance to get counted. There is a lot of funding tied to the U.S. Census that helps everyone in our communities, from our children to the elderly. Make sure to fill it out when you get it. The 10 minutes we spend filling out the Census now will affect our communities for the next 10 years. ■



## MORE PICS FROM HNGD 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Maggy Corkery, Nicolas Paul and Shirley Alc  Konat 



Alain Desvallons Mentor & Cassandra Baptiste



Claude Marcelin "M t Kompa" from  
Montreal



Edith Morisseau giving  
Thanks

---

Entertainers: Enos Fabre & Claude Marcelin





## HISTORY SECTION



### ANECDOTES ABOUT KING HENRY I

*"The evil that men do lives after them;  
The good is oft interred with their bones."  
William Shakespeare*

To parody the great Bard, I come here to revive the memory of King Henry I's good deeds, not to bury them!

King Henry the first is a most maligned ancestor whose legacy deserved more scrutiny and attention than the focus on his supposedly tyrannical rule. As a man with lofty and admirable aspirations, he was known to value excellence, intelligence, education, honesty, hard work, creativity, self-sufficiency, morality, prestige and to contemplate a vision of a wealthy, self-sufficient and prosperous Haiti. With his death in 1820 the dream of a dignified and thriving, instead of a surviving, Haiti, in the courts of nations also ended.

Often, he was heard saying "there is so much to do and so little time in which to do it." He knew Haiti was behind and had to catch up. She needed the arms of all of her children, and when there was a need, he led by example. He was often seen working like any other laborer on the construction of the Citadel and was the first one to burn his mansion when Napoleon's fleet threatened to disembark and take over Cape Haitian. Not only did he destroy his house, he also defiantly refused to surrender threatening to fight the French invaders on the ashes of the city, which he did.

A capable and honest administrator, he died leaving a full treasury that was soon dilapidated by the myopic leaders that followed him. Perhaps, sharing an anecdote or two about King Henri that I heard while growing up would best exemplify the type of man and ruler that he was or perceived to be.

Wanting to hire a master tailor for his court, he came up with a test. All men interested in the position were asked to meet his majesty. Of those, three competitors were selected to have an audience with him. During the meeting, he gave each man the same amount of material to make a suit, but the quantity of the material was much less than that expected to make a suit for a grown man or even an infant.

The first tailor told the king that the material was not enough and, in his opinion, could not be done. The king thanked him for his opinion.

The second one decided that it was too risky to tell the king his true thoughts. He bought extra material and made a suit big enough to fit an average size man. When he took it to the king, confident that he would be pleased, the king was instead furious. He asked him why he got the extra material

and questioned his competence. The tailor explained that thinking the king was testing his loyalty and diligence, he decided to buy the extra material. The king, after thanking him for his good intentions, dismissed him for his lack of creativity and professionalism.

The third tailor after much hand wriggling and sleepless nights, knowing the king was clever, wondered why he would give so little material for a suit. He knew that the king was testing him but could not fathom what he was looking for. So, he decided to do what he can with what he was given. So, he made a suit that would fit a doll the size of a man's hand. With great trepidation, he went to show his work to the king. Overjoyed and with great excitement, the king called his entourage to come and meet a real tailor, whom he congratulated for his common sense, creativity, honesty and courage, and offered him the job of his majesty tailor. Just one more, we need to hear them so we can generate new memes. New mental perceptions of our heroes and of ourselves.

King Henry was feared and respected more than he was loved. He dealt with violations swiftly and severely. One night, the king caught General Guerrier, one of most capable lieutenants who was tired from overwork, asleep on the job during a lull in the workflow. Upon seeing the general, the king called out his name and raised his cane to hit him. Guerrier who by then had already lost one of his arm fighting for Christophe, grab his gun with the hand he had left and told Christophe that if he hit him, he would kill him no matter what happened to him afterwards. To everybody's surprise, the king growled and left him alone with a warning "don't let it happen again."

According to historian Jean Julien, king Henry ran an effective government that produced wealth throughout the kingdom. At his death, millions that were subsequently squandered and never accounted for, were found in the kingdom's treasury and he left many productive and profitable farm plantations and businesses, administrative buildings, and luxurious palaces that were ransacked, looted and left to decay. Contrary to most of the other governments that followed, he believed in an educated citizenry, undertaking an alphabetization project that educated 30% of his subjects. What the children learned during the day they taught their parents at night. In a period of about eight years, from 1812 to 1820, nearly two thirds of the kingdom's population of about 240,000 learned to read and write.

Imagine, just imagine where Haiti would be now, if the governments that followed had given the same priority to education.

*Dr. Jean-Claude Dutès  
Clinical Neuropsychologist  
Student of history ■*

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