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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- In This Issue 1
- Letter from the President 1-2
- Recollections, Reflections and Projections 2-6
- Meet the Graduates 7
- Where Are They Now 8
- Reaching Out, Seeing and Sharing 9-10
- History Section 11
- Community News and Events 12-18
- Thank You 19

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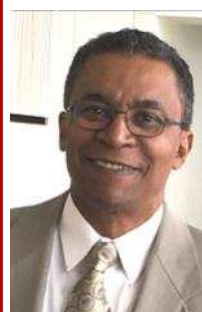
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IN THIS ISSUE...



Hello Dear Friends,

This issue is celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Haitian Network Group of Detroit, or HNGD. In 1999, a group of young professionals informed by their experiences as members of the Haitian community had a vision for an inclusive organization, whose mission would be to educate anyone interested in Haïti's customs, culture and history while forging and strengthening new connections within the community and between it and the larger American society. As you will read from the diverse testimonies, recollections and reflections, HNGD has met and continues to adhere to its mission. Its longevity and success are beyond belief, making it a stellar example for other fledgling organizations with similar hopes and ambitions.

To celebrate this joyous occasion, Zanmi Detroit's editorial staff would like you to join us in wishing HNGD a happy 20th anniversary and continued success. Without further distractions, may you have a pleasant and enlightening reading experience.

Jean-Claude Dutès, Ph.D.
The Editor ■

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND FOUNDING MEMBER



LOOKING BACK, AS WE MOVE FORWARD

First, there was Quisqueya... the initial attempt to form an organization for young adults of Haitian descent in Detroit. Fritz Monplaisir and I were intimately involved with that movement; unfortunately, it fizzled out after a few months. One could say that the reasons for this aborted attempt were multiple: we were not quite ready to fly on our own, the stars were not perfectly aligned, too many competing priorities... The list could go on! To put it simply, it was not the right time.

And then in 1999, we had the perfect storm and Haitian Network Group of Detroit was born. Dr. Marie Soledad Nelson, Fritz and I put our heads together to create an organization that would reflect our needs and fill the void that we were experiencing as young expatriates. At the time, Espoir Haitian American Organization and the Haitian Association of Michigan (HAM) were two entities that offered a number of cultural activities in Metro Detroit, and we religiously attended these functions. Still, because of a generational gap, we felt that something was missing and so we took matters in our own hands.

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