

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

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

Zanmi Detroit is published by the Haitian Network Group of Detroit, whose mission is to promote Haitian culture and provide a forum for Haitians and friends to network.

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

Zanmi Detroit
Haitian Network Group of Detroit
 60 East Milwaukee
 PO Box 2106
 Detroit, MI 48202

WWW.HINGD.ORG

Zanmi Detroit



IN THIS ISSUE...



Hello Dear Friends,

This issue is celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Haitian Network Group of Detroit, or HINGD. 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, HINGD has met and continues to adhere to its mission. Its longevity and success are beyond belief, making it a stellar example for other fledging organizations with similar hopes and ambitions.

To celebrate this joyous occasion, Zanmi Detroit's editorial staff would like you to join us in wishing HINGD 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.

Continued on next page

Never in a million years would have I imagined that HNGD would become the organization that it is today. As with any newly formed group, while we tried to define ourselves, we experienced some challenges and growing pains along the way. We gradually went from a social club, to a bona fide non-profit cultural organization that has become the beacon of the Haitian community. The monthly social gatherings around a home cooked Haitian meal; our first attempt at theatrical production with Maurice Sixto's *Lea Kokoye* followed by two additional plays over the years; the l'Ajoupa events during which we tried to recreate the rural atmosphere of Haiti's *Fèt champèt*; the film festival, *Eyes on Haiti: the Reel Deal* at the Arab American Museum; The celebration of the Bicentennial of the Haitian Revolution at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History; the philanthropic activities to help our compatriots back home; the organized group trips, the most memorable being the recent cruise to Cuba; and now, the *Bèl Bagay Lakay* festival with the main purpose of shining a positive light on Haiti...

The amount of energy, manpower and dedication it took to organize these events is awe-inspiring! Yet, in spite of all these great accomplishments, HNGD's work is just starting. Thanks to an active board that's determined to take HNGD to the next level, the organization is stronger than ever. Shirley, Janny and Alain what a dynamic group to work with! The fun never stops as we eagerly venture in uncharted waters. We are no longer content to remain cocooned in our comfort zone; we are collaborating as much as possible with other entities and even branching out and going beyond the State boundaries to reach other Haitian communities in the Midwest.

As I look back at this amazing journey, I can't help but think how HNGD's trajectory would have been less spectacular without the community's support and the special love for Haiti that keeps Michiganders engaged and wanting to get involved with the organization. I think fondly of the pioneers in our community who laid the framework for us: Dr. Jean Alcé, Dr. Guérin Montilus and Dr. Karen Davis along with the members of HAM: Dr. Philippe Charles, his wife Marcelle, Dr. Serge Jean-Louis, Mr. Gérard Charles, Mr. Pierrot Joseph, Mr. Jean-Baptiste (Boule) Louis, and Mr. Julio Désir. They started the work decades before HNGD and modeled for us what community involvement should look like. I take this opportunity to salute these trailblazers and thank them for their dedication. As we say in French, "Chapeau bas"!

I dare hope that, as it was the case for us, the younger generation will see the importance of keeping the Haitian culture alive in Metro Detroit and of continuing a tradition that started long before HNGD came on the scene.

Maggy Corkery ■

RECOLLECTIONS, REFLECTIONS AND PROJECTIONS



HAITIAN NETWORK GROUP OF DETROIT (HNGD): A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Jean Alcé, MD and Jean-Claude Dutès, Ph.D.

Haitian immigration to Michigan has been going on for years, but it took more than a decade before Haitians came to see themselves as a vibrant community. That it took that long for a sense of community to develop is related to a number of factors, both personal and social, that cannot be covered here. Perhaps, the daily life challenges confronting many Haitians living away from the nuclear family left in Haiti coupled with the difficulties associated with adjusting to a host country with a different language and customs played prominent roles.

Being away from Haiti, however, did not shield Haitian immigrants from the realities back home and in this country. Haiti's internal problems, as experienced through television, telephone, newspapers and letters did not leave Haitian immigrants indifferent. The travails of Haitians braving the high seas to get to Florida, their unjust incarceration in Krome Detention Center, and CDC's discriminatory decision to associate Haitians with the HIV virus assaulted the dignity of Haitians everywhere. At about that time, the fall of the Duvalier dynasty, father and son, combined with the indignation, anger and disgust about the depiction of Haiti and unfair treatment of our Haitian brothers and sisters in America triggered a renewed sense of hope and generated a new consciousness in Haitians living in the United States. Thus, it is not surprising that the brutal years of shame, death and desperation associated with the dictatorship, and the disappointments experienced as immigrants, awaken our resolute and combative spirit into a renewed sense of brother and sisterhood that brought out the best out of the Haitian immigrants, not only in Michigan but in many other parts of America. From the immigrant factions emerged the sense of shared experiences that generated a much-needed sense of community. In Michigan, we experienced the birth of a community coming together through organizations such as the Haitian American of Michigan, or HAM, and ESPOIR in Detroit and in other American cities.

HNGD came from the entrails of these early organizations but is a totally new experience. With a new generation of highly intelligent leaders with a vision informed by the experiences of the previous organizations, the Haitian Network Group of Detroit (HNGD) has so far avoided the mistakes and pitfalls of its predecessors. Its vision is broader and its reach more inclusive, focusing on what unites instead of what has been divisive in the past. This recipe has worked. After twenty years, HNGD is vibrant and successful, defying our

Continued on next page

imagination every time by exceptional programing with one focus: Haiti. Through lectures, theater presentations, concerts and festivals, HNGD has touched Haitian history, literature and life, educating Haitians and non-Haitians about Haitian culture, and more importantly making new friends for Haiti and the growing Haitian Community in America.

After the cataclysmic events: the hurricane in Gonaives in 2006 and the earthquake of January 12, 2010, HNGD under the leadership of Mr. Fritz Monplaisir and then president Rosario Danier, was at the forefront, offering an outlet for channeling anguish and helplessness into concrete altruistic actions aiding hundreds in Haiti. Sensitive to mental health issues, HNGD introduced discussions about the effects of immigration on Haitian mental health and on the importance of fathers.

Using the talent of its members, HNGD, under the direction of Mr. Joe Etienne presented Maurice Sixto's "Lea Kokoye" as a play and Ms. Margaret Corkery directed Dr. Jean-Claude Dutes's play "Drame de la Famille Haïtienne." With a fusion of modern and tropical designs and a mixture of colors, a distinctive couture found its expression. Through fashion shows, the talented Dr. Marie Soledad Nelson celebrated the female forms and shapes, adorning graceful models with imaginative accoutrements.



Fritz Momplaisir, Raphael Bolivar, Fatima Charles, Melissa Chamblain & Reynold F. Charles in the play: "Drame de la Famille Haïtienne"



Father's day panel presentation on "The importance of fathers" left to right: Mr. Pierre Richard Lamarre, Dr. Jean Alc , Dr. Jean-Claude Dut s & Mr. Kevin Louis.

Two years ago, the event "B L BAGAY LAKAY" was an extraordinary demonstration of the organizational capacity of the group: an exhibition and celebration of Haitian art that brought artists from around the world, stunned everyone's imagination. Keeping the community informed and cementing the bonds among members far and wide, it publishes a newsletter that other Haitian communities have expressed interest in emulating.



"B L BAGAY LAKAY" artist: Ms. Gina Samson



"B L BAGAY LAKAY" attendees: from left to right: Micaella Pierre-Jean, Leah and Pascal L on



"B L BAGAY LAKAY" Artist Mr. Jacques Toussaint in action

Continued on next page

In the arts, HNGD has brought several musicians from around the diaspora to entertain and educate us about Haitian music, with genre from folk to opera. In history, Professor Laurent Dubois educated us about the Haitian revolution and Mr. Marc Christophe broadened our understanding of General Toussaint’s Louverture leadership while deepening our appreciation of his personality. On many occasions, Professors Guérin Montilus and Jean-Claude Dutès edified the Detroit community through various lectures on Haitian culture, history and Mental Health, and on more than one occasion we have been soothed by Dr. Dutès’s melodious reading of French love poems. More recently, the introduction and acknowledgement of the book “American Street” by IBI ZOBOI was a unique experience that captivated the curiosity of the elders as well as of the attention of the youngsters. Our foods have also been celebrated, as our cooks have introduced the American public to many of our scrumptious dishes and desserts. Many other activities, too many to list here, served the same great purpose.

The Board of Directors is always the key to the success of any organization, and yet its members are often little more than names to the other members, friends and contacts of the organization. There are also those who have not gotten public recognition, but whose effort and deeds contributed to the success of every event. Everyone who has ever helped set the room for an event, prepare a dish, reach out to inform others of a program and strengthen the community by distributing a pamphlet, sending an email, bringing a friend to a function is part of HNGD’s success. Our non-Haitian friends will not be forgotten either. Their responses to our request for assistance, financial contribution and allocation of space to hold our events have been invaluable. Although too many to list here, of note are Wayne State University, Madonna University and the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History.

At this point, we would like to take our hats off in salute to the founding members and introduce current and most public faces of HNGD, the officers who have led and those striving daily to keep the organization alive:

FOUNDING MEMBERS

- Ms. Magareth Corkery
- Mr. Fritz Monplaisir
- Dr. Marie Soledad Nelson

CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS

- Ms. Shirley Alcé
- Ms. Margareth Corkery
- Mr. Alain Desvallons-Mentor
- Ms. Janny Magloire Milton

COMMITTEES:

- **Bylaws and Election Committee:**
 - Dr. Marie soledad Nelson (Chairperson)
 - Fritz Momplaisir
- **Membership Committee:**
 - Lise-Pauline Barnett
 - Carine J. Hails

ASSOCIATES

- Dr. Jean-Claude Dutès, Editor of Newsletter, “Zanmi Detroit,” and Former Vice President
- Ms. Maggy Moise Thomas: Layout Editor, Newsletter, “Zanmy Detroit” ■



Continued on next page

20TH ANNIVERSARY: THE LEGACY OF THE HAITIAN NETWORK GROUP OF DETROIT

Rosario Danier



Two days after I was elected to the Office of the President of Haitian Network Group of Detroit (HNGD), Haiti was struck by one of the most destructive earthquakes in the history of the country.

Within hours my phone started to ring. I reached out to HNGD board members and scheduled a meeting to strategize our response to the disaster.

People came to offer their support and inquire about their loved ones living in Haiti. Some were looking for reassurance that everything would be fine.

I quickly realized I had a grieving community in need of comfort, solace and a way to mourn the dead.

I also realized that the swiftly unfolding situation was beyond my ability to handle alone.

Fritz Momplaisir, activist and co-founder of HNGD, reached out to The Charles Wright Museum of African American History and, with a group of current and former HNGD board members, organized an event at the museum to honor those who had perished in the earthquake.

As the President of HNGD, I still struggled with how to personally respond to the tragedy.

The event at the Charles Wright Museum was unlike anything I had experienced in any previous position of leadership. In addition to the emotional impact, the local Haitian community was looking for me, as their leader, to provide them with comfort and direction.

Following closely the events unfolding in Haiti, I came across an article that described the destruction of Holy Trinity Music School (HTMS), a nonprofit institution that provided high level musical training, specializing in vocal and instrumental instruction. HTMS taught over fifteen hundred Haitian students in the music arts.

I contacted a friend at the Jazz Network Foundation to coordinate a benefit concert on behalf of Holy Trinity Music School. The event was called “Night of Classical Music” that featured local artists from Detroit and instructors from HTMS.

HNGD got the word out and in response, Dr. Liana Valente, Director of the People to People Project at Sigma Alpha Iota philanthropies, Inc. traveled from Florida with a check for

\$2,000 and a pledge of \$30,000 worth of musical instruments for the Holy Trinity Music School in Haiti. International support came in the form of **Mrs. Nicole Saint-Victor, a famed Haitian Soprano artist** and music teacher at HTMS, who traveled from Haiti to perform at “Night of Classical Music.” True to HNDG’s mission, we promoted Haiti’s culture and raised more than forty thousand dollars (\$40,000.00) in donations and musical instruments for the school.



It was a defining moment for the HNGD and for me, personally. We came together, harnessed the collective energy of our need to help, and accomplished more than we had hoped to for the victims of the earthquake. HNGD represented our community and served well its members and supporters here and abroad.

In retrospect, ten years prior to the earthquake, three young Haitians, Fritz Momplaisir, Magareth Corkery and Dr. Soledad Nelson, formed HNGD. The primary purpose was to preserve, promote, and share Haitian culture in the State of Michigan. They began by organizing small events where they would share a Haitian meal and dance to the rhythms of Konpa music. Unexpectedly, the co-founders created an entity that has endured despite many challenges and obstacles.

It is said that there can be no organization without dedicated members, but we were reminded frequently that there could be no organization without dedicated leadership. HNGD filled the mandate for both excellent leadership and loyal membership.

HNGD’s response to Haiti’s devastating earthquake is not unique. Since its inception, HNGD has organized several activities including the 2004 Bicentennial Conference, multiple lectures, plays, poetry reading, Health Fair, film festival and funded scholarship program for Nursing students living in Haiti. Along the way we came to embrace meaningfully a place far away and, in the process, a new family at HNGD was born.

Unconditionally, this family came to respect and love each other and learned that they are never alone.

If the true value of an organization can be measured by its absence, then it is hard for me to envision a world without The Haitian Network Group of Detroit.

The knowledge we gained by our interactions with the community, the people we met, and the lives we impacted engendered in us lasting friendships that will never be replaced. More than what the co-founders imagined, their efforts evolved into something necessary and great. Their legacy has endured and morphed into something none of us anticipated. Two decades later, HNGD is celebrating its 20th Anniversary and the future for the organization looks bright. To Fritz Momplaisir, Magareth Corkery and Dr. Soledad Nelson, the co-founders of HNGD, and to all the past and current Board members, the Detroit and Haitian communities owe an enormous debt of gratitude to you for your vision and service. ■

Continued on next page

HIAITIAN NETWORK GROUP OF DETROIT: A COUPLE REFLECTS AND REMEMBERS

Haitian Network Group of Detroit will be 20 years old this year. As a former officer of the group, I realize we need to remain true to our core values, vision, and mission. Networking is the big key to success for any group because it helps generate growth and opportunities for its members. We can help enhance our Haitian community by bringing people together whether you are new to the group, Haitian or not. It raises our awareness of our Haitian culture by helping to educate our young crowd through different projects that inspire us to advocate for cultural diversity in Detroit.



Reynold F. Charles

When I moved from Boston, MA to Detroit, MI over 19 years ago with my husband and family, I didn't know too many people. The Haitian Network Group of Detroit made me feel welcome from the first time I met them. Over the years, I have gotten to know many new people and consider some like family. Through this group and my husband I got to learn more about the culture, entertainment, music, art and its history. This will be forever apart of my home.



Pamela F. Charles ■

A GROWTH EXPERIENCE



During my time serving on the HNGD board as Vice President, I was able to deepen my relationships with the Haitian and greater Detroit community through all the various events. I really enjoyed the event planning aspect and working closely with so many intelligent people who shared the same passion for Haitian culture.

Some of my all-time favorite events were: L'ajoupa, the bicentennial conference, and the Lea Kokoye play. Reflecting, I may have been the youngest member at that time, but I am very grateful to have been amongst a great group of people. I have so many great memories of our time together and all the hard work we put into preserving our culture.

Happy 20th anniversary to HNGD, and a special thank you to the founding members.

With Love,

Catherine (Auguste) Dauphin ■

REFLECTIONS OF A FOUNDING MEMBER

Dr. Marie Soledad Nelson

As a co-founder and past president of the Haitian Network Group of Detroit, it is astonishing that it has been 20 years since the organization's inception. When I reflect on the emotions that fueled the march on the journey to its establishment, a few words come to mind: Love, Passion and Pride for Haitian culture. Being young and energetic, there was the confidence and courage to explore new ideas for a prosperous cohesive community. These same adjectives are the reason the organization is still successful today. The aim was to create a home away from home, a support system that facilitated growth, edification and philanthropy. The Haitian Network Group of Detroit, synonymous with family, has adhered to its mission and has been successful beyond belief and imagination. Bravo! ■



20 YEARS: KEEP GOING!



Wow! Congratulations HNGD on your 20-year anniversary. It feels like yesterday when I was nominated as treasurer of the organization.

It was a pleasure to have served in this capacity.

Keep up the good work!

Mylla Danjou Aslsobrooks ■

NOTES ABOUT HNGD

Being part of HNGD, this great association, has been a tremendous pleasure for me.

I had the privilege to serve as treasurer some years ago for a short period of time. While my time of service was brief, I can still recall the high level of professionalism and friendship among the staff.

I want to seize this opportunity to wish HNGD Happy 20th Anniversary. I am so proud of all its accomplishments.

May it continue to positively represent the colorful beauty of Haiti in the Detroit Metro area.



Becel Dubreuze Jr. ■



MEET THE GRADUATES

Besides ensuring our physical and emotional survival, the second most important contribution parents make to the lives of their children is to provide them with best education their means allow. With an education we are always in a position to turn luck into an opportunity for durable achievement of any kind. In a tribute to both parents and their remarkable children, we are happy to recognize the graduates for their academic and /or professional achievements.

CONGRATULATIONS!

ALEXANDRA BRUTUS



graduated from Avondale High School in May 2019. While in school, she was the co-founder of the Queens of Melanin, which was established to provide young girls of color with a safe space to fellowship and to be mentored by other professional women. She also played on the Girls Basketball team, volunteered with the Boys and Girls Club of Southeast Michigan, and served on her church's praise and worship

team as a lead vocalist. In her spare time, Alexandra likes to sing and perfect her manicuring skills. Alexandra had the honor of serving as Ms. Haiti in the 2018 CCCO pageant and was crowned Ms. Carnaval. She was also selected by her fellow pageant participants as Ms. Congeniality for her welcoming personality and willingness to help others. Alexandra will attend Oakland Community College, starting this fall. Afterwards, she plans to attend Michigan State University and major in Biology. She hopes to become a Surgeon, a nurse, or a Physician's Assistant, but she is still undecided. All that she knows for sure is that she desires a career that will allow her to help and heal others. . ■

Congratulations to CASYANA SIMÉON



on graduating from Novi High School. In the fall she will be starting the Pre-Med program at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. This young woman kept very busy during her High School years; her latest accomplishment is her participation this past week in HOSA's 42nd annual inter-

national competitive conference which included events focused on leadership, professional and technical skills. HOSA is an organization whose mission is to promote career opportunities in the health care industry and enhance the delivery of quality health care to all people. Casyana placed 6th in the Secondary Division of her event which included hundreds of competitors. Way to go Casy! Kudos to her mother and biggest fan, Cathy! ■

AIXA DAPHNE MARCHAND



received a doctoral degree in the combined program in education and psychology at the University of Michigan this past May. In July, She will start teaching at Rhodes College in Memphis Tennessee in the Department of Psychology as an Assistant Professor. Her dissertation title was Black Parent Critical Consciousness: Conceptualization, Measurement, and Links to Parent School Engagement.

Aixa is a member of the Haitian Network Group of Detroit. She volunteered at the 2017 Bel Bagay Lakay Festival and is always a frequent participant in the activities of the group. Aixa will be missed in the community. We wish her success in her new endeavor. ■

SABRINA CHARLES,



daughter of Jocelyne and Michel Charles, graduated recently from Howard University. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology and is currently studying for the MCAT. Sabrina is applying for medical school and working at a psychiatric clinic in the Washington D.C. area. Sabrina has hopes of obtaining a Doctor of Medicine degree as well as a master's degree in Public Health, with an ultimate goal of becoming a surgical oncologist. ■



WHERE ARE THEY NOW ?



Dr. Jean-Claude Dutès

As it has been the case for many members of the Haitian community in Metro Detroit, Dr. Dutès relocated to sunny Florida after having called East Lansing home for more than three decades. Attending Michigan State University as a doctoral student and later becoming faculty, he retired four

years ago from his position as Section Leader of the Neuropsychology/Psychology Unit in the Department of Radiology of the College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Moving to Florida offered Dr. Dutès the opportunity to bring his expertise to fellow Haitians, being the only trained and practicing neuropsychologist of Haitian descent in the United States as of this writing. Since leaving Michigan, Jean-Claude has joined Florida Atlantic University's Louis and Anne's Memory and Wellness Center as a Cross-Cultural Psychologist providing neuropsychological and psychological services to persons of Haitian descents suffering with brain based conditions such as dementia. For about two year, the Children Community Wellness Center, an outpatient mental health clinic, provided mental health services under his leadership to Haitian children and their families. As the psychologist of the center, Dr. Dutes was instrumental in identifying Haitian children with learning disabilities and assisting them in getting adequate educational services and accommodations. Serving as director, he assisted US trained mental health practitioners of Haitian descents in understanding the effects of culture on mental health and assisted them in acquiring the skills and attitudes necessary for providing culturally competent services to the Haitian immigrant population. Because of changes in his vision, Dr. Dutès has had to reduce his post retirement professional activities, working one day a week since January of this year, although he continues to be highly active, lecturing and educating the Haitian community about mental health. In the last two years, he published two academic papers, one of which is based on a lecture he gave in 2002 at a HNGD event on the effects of emotions on acculturation strategies used by Haitian immigrants in adjusting to American society, and another, currently in press, that deals with the challenges facing mental health practitioners working with Haitian immigrants in the US.

As a Michigander, Jean-Claude forged friendships that withstood the test of time and which he continues to cultivate despite the distance. Although he now resides in another state, the popular French expression "Loin des yeux, loin du cœur" ("out of sight, out of mind") certainly does not apply

to him. Last January, the Haitian Network Group of Detroit was lucky to have him as a guest lecturer, and he is the editor of our newsletter, "Zanmi Detroit."

In his spare time, Dr. Dutès, a fervent patron of the arts, enjoys the theater, opera and independent films. A wanderer, or "pigeon voyageur" as some people like to call him, when not working, he is traveling within the US, visiting his son and his family in the Chicago area and his father and siblings in New York.



with son, Jean-Paul, and grand daughter, Madison



If you have difficulty reaching him via phone or email in the US, try using WhatsApp, as he might be anywhere in the world. Although for the last 18 months he has had to suspend his benevolent activities at the Faculté Des Sciences Infirmières de Leôgane, the nursing school supported by the Haiti Nursing Foundation, due to the precarious safety conditions in Haiti, he hopes to be able to resume his work

there soon. To keep fit, Jean-Claude is taking advantage of the weather in Florida, playing lawn tennis and golf, taking long walks and bike rides, and of course, dancing.

Our community's partial loss of such a talented and dedicated individual is Palm Beach County's gain. Although his departure has left a void, we wish Dr. Dutès all the best in his new home and hope that he will continue to be with us in spirit, and among us in "corps et âme," ("body and soul," whenever his dear HNGD can find a slot in his schedule. ■



HERE TO HELP

By: Nina Thomas from Silver Spring, Maryland



At my school, students are always willing to do whatever they can to help people who are less privileged than they are. Being a part of a community that is willing to help others so often, I was inspired to help the communities that I am apart of outside of school. As a National Honors Society member, I know it is my duty to go above and beyond for those around me who are in need. National Honors Society is an organization that consists of the very best students in high schools around the country based on

the four pillars of scholarship, service, leadership, and character. Each chapter of this society has its own rules and standards set by the schools that students must keep up with, and at my school it is very rigorous, but I am glad to be an active member. We were told by our sponsor that spring is the time for individual students to shine, and run drives to help different communities by donating items or volunteering in person to help in a more intimate way. Looking at the many local options I had, I decided to reach out to my aunt so I could help the community I am closest to, the Haitian community.

I was able to get in contact with Mrs. Patty Alley, one of the coordinators for the Have Faith Haiti Mission in Delmas (Haiti), who always finds a way to help the children in Haiti who need it. Through the email exchanges between Patty and I, we were able to formulate a plan that would work well for the Haitian children, herself, and me. I was able to present to other NHS members the items that we need to collect such as backpacks, pencils, notebooks, and other school supplies for the children. Many of the students were eager to help and had items to gather that they could bring over the next few weeks for me to collect. This project will run for a few weeks as we attempt to gather as many supplies as possible so that they can be shipped from Maryland to Patty and eventually the children of Haiti.

Even if this is a small donation, it will make an impact in more ways than I could ever imagine. I was aware of the aid Haiti needed beforehand, but helping out with this drive, made me feel like I am truly making an impact, even if I am just donating school supplies. This project made me realize that what is readily available to me may not be so easily accessible to others, and I want to help in any way I can. I take my education seriously here, and the children in Haiti should be able to do so as well, and I am glad I am contributing to that. ■

A TRIP TO THE MOTHERLAND

Sabrina Cesaire

On 2-14-19, I traveled to Dakar Senegal on a personal missionary trip. My goal and desire have always been to visit the motherland. When I arrived in Senegal, I immediately noticed that the people look like me and we shared the same common language of French. After the initial couple of days, I felt a sense of belonging, family, love and connection. I felt like my soul was at peace. It was like a homecoming. The people are kind, friendly and reminded me so much of being in my native home of Haiti.

On this mission trip, I took 80 book bags filled with supplies and hygiene products. I also took another suitcase of clothing. The home I stayed at was across the street from a dilapidated elementary school to which I was able to donate the bags of books. The clothe drive was a success because I was able to help 30 families ranging from young to older women. I made long lasting relationships and am currently sponsoring a young man's education. I also got a friend to commit to sponsor a young lady for a year toward her education.



My plea is to encourage others to sponsor a child anywhere. I knew this would be a life changing experience for me, but I didn't know how much it would impact and motivate me to do more.

Sabrina Cesaire, LMSW. ■

THE MAGIC OF AYITI CHERI

BY KRISTINA GRAHAM



The first time I went to Haiti was October of 2014. I had signed up for a trip through my church, to head to a remote mountain community in the south-eastern part of the country, called Seguin.

Continued on next page



This was my first time traveling internationally alone, with a group of strangers. I was nervous. I didn't know what to expect. Growing up, all I knew of Haiti was the earthquake, the poverty, what they show you on the news; the negative.

We got off the plane in Port-Au-Prince and were met with the warm, humid air and a live band playing Kompa music with string instruments, drums and maracas. Their smiles were warm and their presence inviting. I was immediately comforted by their welcome address for a foreigner in their country.

We got in line at customs, we paid our tourist fee, and we went downstairs to grab our bags. Each one of us pushing a cart, in a single file line, to get out the doors quickly and easily.

There were more people in the airport than I had ever seen before. You stepped outside and the warm sun shown on your face, and you started to take in the smells of Haiti. It is indescribable. But when you experience it, it feels like coming home.

The first day was overwhelming. We drove through the streets of Port-Au-Prince and immediately saw the poverty, the broken buildings, the trash piled up or burning, the massive amounts of people everywhere, the markets overflowing.

You didn't know what to think. You processed.

But the people, oh the people. So warm and inviting. Smiling at you, asking how you are, welcoming you to their country.

That first night we drove all the way to Jacmel. Though the distance between Port-Au-Prince and Jacmel is not far, the road is mostly on the mountain and can take anywhere from 2 1/2 hours to 5 hours depending on traffic. We wound our way up, down and through the mountain and took in our first glimpses of the incredible, unreal beauty of Ayiti Cheri.

My eyes were glued to the windows as we watched the sun set over the mountains. There is a Haitian Proverb that says, "Deye Mon, Gen Mon" which translates to "Mountains Beyond Mountains". As you take in the views, you can see where this comes from. The mountains seem endless. Not just in the landscape, but in what the Haitian population has had to face throughout their entire lives.

The second day of my first trip was the day I fell completely in love with Ayiti Cheri.

We traveled in a large tap-tap up the unpaved roads of the mountain passing from Jacmel to Seguin. We traveled through Peredo, Marigot, Fond Jean Noel and many other small communities on the mountain roads.

We bonded with our new Haitian friends in the tap-tap, having sing-alongs with the speaker they had brought with us,

bouncing back and forth through the rocky road. Forming new friendships, learning new language, and being introduced to our first encounter of the deep warmth that people can bring.

When we got to Seguin, we were immediately welcomed by hugs, new hands to hold, and big brown eyes looking up at us.

It was something I had never experienced in my entire life, and yet it felt like I was meant to arrive all along. It made me realize that love is

the universal language of the world. Though I did not know kreol at the time, we could communicate immediately.

These people take root so deeply in your heart. I realized I had just stepped into a piece of my purpose.

There are not enough words to explain what that first week on the island taught me. It brought new life to my bones, and showed me that the world is a whole lot bigger than I was ever taught to believe. It created in me a new passion for life, for learning, and for growing. It taught me that we should not take what we see on the news as factual evidence of a place, or her people. Go to that country, for yourself.

Go into the communities there, and see that people are people everywhere. They are warm and inviting and they want to show you that the story being written in their country is not what you see on the news.

Through the kindness of the people of Ayiti Cheri, I found a new home. One where all people are accepted, loved and shown grace. A piece of me was missing before I stepped foot on Haitian soil, and I can say that I am eternally grateful for what Haiti has done in my life.

Fast forward almost 5 years, and I am more in love with Haiti than ever.

That first trip in October 2014 started me on a path of changing my entire life; opening my eyes to the world around me. I am continuing to learn about the magic that lies within the streets, the palms, the waves, and the mountains of Ayiti Cheri.

But I can say, it is forever a part of me, now. ■

SEE YOU AT BEL BAGAY LAKAY FESTIVAL

SATURDAY JULY 27 (6PM to 11PM) AND

SUNDAY JULY 28 (11AM to 10 PM)



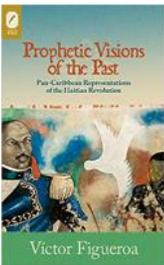
HISTORY SECTION



“THE HAITIAN REVOLUTION IN THE CARIBBEAN LITERARY IMAGINATION”

BY PROFESSOR JORGE L. CHINEA, WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

The Haitian Revolution, which became the subject of a Black History Month lecture held at the Wayne State University Law School’s Spencer M. Partrich Auditorium last February 28, continues to draw the attention of scholars, laypersons and students. The program was sponsored by the Center for Latino/a and Latin American Studies, the Haitian Network Group of Detroit, the Department of African American Studies and the Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights. Presented by Dr. Victor Figueroa, a faculty member in Wayne State’s Department of Classical and Modern Languages, Literatures,



and Cultures, the talk outlined some of the major conclusions advanced in his 2016 book, *Prophetic Visions of the Past: Pan-Caribbean Representations of the Haitian Revolution*.

The author began his presentation by relating an anecdote that rings familiar to many Caribbean islanders: how relatively few residents of any one area know of the larger zone and its diverse people. Although the inhabitants of the archipelago share many experiences—such as an indigenous past, European colonialism, various forms of servile labor, and the central role played by commercial agriculture—an over-emphasis on local or national developments has overshadowed broader, pan-Antillean perspectives. Although he acknowledged the real problems posed by the communication barriers separating the Spanish, British, French, Danish and Dutch Caribbean, Figueroa challenged this linguistic obstacle by examining the far-reaching literary influence of the Haitian Revolution, a theme that cuts across the insular boundaries that purport to divide the landscape and seascape within this region.

The Haitian Revolution was the last of a string of revolutionary movements that shook the Atlantic world during the last third of the eighteenth century. But unlike its predecessors, the one that took place in the former French colony of St. Domingue was unique in several respects: it occurred in the heart of Plantation America, that is, at the core of the system

of agricultural estates that produced the bulk of sugar and coffee imported to France and its worldwide empire; it brought down the brutal institution of black slavery that made that unprecedented level of production possible; it led to the establishment in 1804 of the second republic in the Americas, one founded by former enslaved Africans and their descendants; and it redefined the meanings of freedom, civil rights and equality at home and abroad.

According to Figueroa, twentieth-century Caribbean writers, including Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier, Martinican poet, author and politician Aimé Césaire and St. Lucian poet Derek Walcott, viewed the Haitian Revolution from their own unique vantage points. Their narratives were colored not only by their own personal experiences, political agendas, ideological positions, interests and values at specific historical junctures and geographical locations, but also by the relative importance that each of them assigned to the African, European and American influences that shaped the insurrection; the real or perceived successes or failures of the revolution itself, and its impact on modern-day Caribbean politics; the changing social, economic and political atmosphere that informed the period in which they penned their interpretations; as well as by the crippling impact that colonialism and imperialism have exerted on their native islands, among other factors. Autographed copies of Figueroa’s book were sold at the conclusion of the event, much to the satisfaction of participants who braved the inclement weather

to attend the informative, cultural awareness event. ■



Dr. Jorge China, Janny Magloire Milton, Dr. Victor Figueroa, Maggy Corkery and Alain Desvallons-Mentor



WE EXTEND OUR CONGRATULATIONS TO THE BRIGHT STARS IN OUR COMMUNITY



◆ **JEAN-CLAUDE DUTÈS, PH.D.**, Psychologist/Clinical Neuropsychologist, published an article entitled “Emotional states and acculturation strategies of Haitians and Haitian Americans in the United States.” *Ethnopsychiatrie en Haiti: Revue Haïtienne de Santé Mentale*, Mai (May) 2018. ■

◆ **JEAN-CLAUDE DUTÈS, PH.D.**, Psychologist/Clinical Neuropsychologist, published an article entitled “Challenges and pitfalls in the psychological evaluation and treatment of Haitians and Haitian Americans in the United States.” *Ethnopsychiatrie en Haiti: Revue Haïtienne de Santé Mentale*, (In Press) Juin (June) 2019. ■

◆ **ENOS FABRE** received the Ford 2018 Vehicle Engineering Team Award. This multi-talented young man is an accomplished musician who was invited to perform on May 9 at the Fisher Music Center for the Gilda’s Club event to benefit families facing cancer. Enos will also be sharing his talent with the public during the Mitch Albom *Eat Detroit* Charity Event on June 19. ■



◆ **JANNY MAGLOIRE MILTON** was recently elected President of the Girl Friends, Inc. Detroit Chapter. For decades this socially conscious organization of women of color has been showing its commitment to communities in our area through the support of various charities. Thanks to Janny’s involvement, Girl Friends, Inc. has provided financial assistance to the people of Haiti for a number of years. ■



PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS



Congratulations to **RÉGINE C. BEAUBŒUF** on receiving the 2019 International Award at the *Ladies Who Lead* Luncheon hosted by the Renaissance MI Chapter of the Links, INC.



On March 9, during a spectacular affair at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Régine and Rochelle Riley from the Detroit Free Press were recognized for their leadership skills and outstanding contribution that have made an impact in Metro Detroit and beyond. The program emceed by WDIV -Local 4 Rhonda Walker, included many well-known "Ladies Who Lead", including Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence.

Bravo Régine! We are very proud of you! ■



DOMINIQUE MORISSEAU

Hats off to Dominique Morisseau!

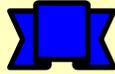
In addition to having written over nine plays and being one of 25 fellows to win grants from the MacArthur Foundation, Dominique authored one of Broadway’s hottest shows this season, *Ain’t Too Proud: The Life and Times of The Temptations*. The show was nominated for 12 Tony Awards, including best musical.



We are eagerly anticipating the opportunity to view another one of her plays in Detroit! ■

**HNGD NEEDS YOU AT
BEL BAGAY LAKAY FESTIVAL**

**SATURDAY JULY 27 (6PM–11PM) &
SUNDAY JULY 28 (11AM–10 PM)**



Congratulations to **GRACIE XAVIER** on being a 2018 Marshall Memorial Fellow. She is one of the 74 lucky individuals who were selected for this prestigious award. The Marshall Memorial Fellowship is a leadership development program for the best and brightest from all sectors, including business, government, and civil society. Before heading for a journey that included 24 days of policy immersion in Europe, Gracie who is employed with Global Detroit, underwent a 6-month training designed to enhance her understanding of transatlantic relations. Gracie joins a network that includes exemplary alumni like the current President of France, Emmanuel Macron and the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Pinnacle Technical Resources, Nina Vaca. Félicitations Gracie! ■



THE MODEL



On Thursday morning, March 28, **HELEN-WIDMA BERKEMEIER** was honored to be chosen to model a beautiful navy-blue Easter dress for Connie's Children's Shop on Fox2 News Morning The Nine. She wore a smart navy and white hat with matching white gloves and shoes.
<http://www.shopconnies.com/>

Helen and her mom arrived at 8:30am at the Fox2 News studio in Southfield. They met the other young models and had about an hour to prep in the green room. Helen practiced twirling in her dress in front of the mirror, making sure her hat was on just right. The Fox2 News team was gracious, and they loved the outfits. Helen's class at Lanigan watched it live, and her math teacher recorded it. She was treated like a star that day at school! Helen looks forward to being able to model another beautiful dress from Connie's.

Helen-Widma is 10 years old and is a 4th grader at Lanigan Elementary in Farmington Hills. Her proud mom is HNGD member Jennifer Berkemeier. ■



AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE: PLAYING AT MITCH ALBUM'S BOOK RELEASE PARTY

Enos Fabre

A few months ago I was lucky enough to be invited to take part in the release party for Mitch Album new book "the Next Person You Meet in Heaven". It's a sequel to one of his best-selling books "The Five People You Meet in Heaven." As with everything Mitch does, he didn't use the occasion to party with friends/celebrities and talk about his new book. He used it instead to raise money for the underserved and impoverished children of Haiti and Detroit. The event was divided into two parts, a VIP dinner followed by a talk show like format with celebrities and musical performances. I was fortunate enough to perform in both parts of the event, and the experience was nothing but amazing.

The first part of the event was the VIP dinner, which started early in the evening before the main event. It was packed with many well-known celebrities such as Anderson Cooper (CNN News anchor) - Jane Pauley (Host of CBS Sunday Morning Show) - Bob Costas (NBC Sports) - Joe Dumars (Hall of Fame Detroit Piston) - Belo (Popular Haitian Artist) - Jim Harbaugh (Michigan Football Head Coach), just to name a few. The event was hosted by Mitch himself. My good friend and saxophonist, Christopher Patterson and I played for about an hour at the VIP event. We played a mixed of different genres, which included pop, reggae, and Haitian folklore music. The crowd seemed to love it and that helped energize us and enliven the atmosphere.

For the second part of the program, the main event, I was also invited to play the opening song. I was given the instruction to play the introduction song, and told that because of lack of time, it couldn't be no more than 2 to 2.5 minutes. So, I ended up writing a 2.5 minutes song with an English and creole/French verse for the program.

As is the case with challenges, opportunities sometimes await around the corner: playing for the main event gave me the opportunity to have more intimate conversations with the celebrities backstage. For example, I found out that Piston Basketball Hall of famer Joe Dumars has Haitian heritage. In fact, his grandmother is Haitian. I should have thought of it since his last name is "Dumars" a true Haitian name. Meeting Anderson Cooper was also amazing. Based on the crowd size around him at the VIP dinner, I thought he was the biggest celebrity at the event. Talking to him, I learned that he is a very kind and humble person. He seems happy and willing to take pictures with each and every one who was there. I never saw him once com-



Enos Fabre & Anderson Cooper

Continued on next page



plain or turn away any one who wanted to take a picture with him. While we were back stage, at one point I asked him how does he deals with all the attention he received on a daily basis, not being able to do simple task as walking outside without being called by someone to take a picture etc. he answered with a smile, “after a while you get used to it”.

I also had a chance to meet the Grammy nominated singer KEM. I must admit, not growing up in Detroit, I didn't know much about him or his music. Once I found out he was also going to be performing at the event, I began to research and learned more about him. His story is truly remarkable. Here's a guy who started with absolutely nothing and to see where he is today should give everyone hope. I myself being from the island of Haiti can relate to his story. He seems to be so cool and smooth to me in his talk, walk and smile etc. At one point backstage, I began to tease him and asked him what can I do to be as cool as he is, he just smile. I called him Mr. Cool.

Next, I'll never forget meeting Haitian artists Belo. Once I found out he was going to perform at the event, I got really excited because I like his music and the style of music that he plays. One of his song that I really like and played every so often is titled “Lakou Lakay”. HNGD was kind enough to arrange a dinner for a more intimate setting between Belo and myself and I thank them very much for arranging it. He's a very kind and humble individual as well. I really enjoyed our conversation. We exchanged numbers and we now text each other from time to time. It was a great honor to meet him.



Enos Fabre & Mitch Album

Finally, I'll forever be thankful to Mitch Album for not just the opportunity to perform at the event but for all the great work he has done and continues to do in the community, especially in my home country Haiti. From

everything I know about Mitch, it seems everything he does revolves around giving and just making life better for people around him, even those he doesn't even know. That's special! Everyone one of my people that attended the event was calling me afterward to tell me how kind and humble Mitch was and I told them I've never seen him any different. It was truly an amazing night and a lot of money was raised for a very good cause. I was blessed and so glad to have been a part of it.

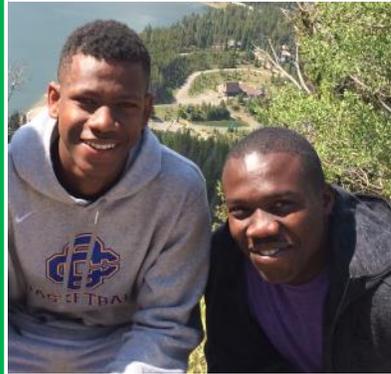
According to your celebratory or entertainment need, Enos Fabre can be contacted for occasions such as weddings, baptisms, anniversaries, art fairs, music festivals, fundraisers, open houses, and other banquets events. Send your booking requests to: efabremusic@gmail.com or call 248-895-3310. www.efabremusic.com

EDUCATION: A REALITY FOR SOME, A DREAM FOR MANY AND AN ILLUSION FOR COUNTLESS OTHERS.

by Emmanuel Gédéon



Emmanuel Gédéon and Siem Lafleur



Growing up in Haiti, I never imagined that I would be attending a university nor coming to the United States to do this. I grew up in an orphanage where the basic needs were barely provided. At that time, we did not have a lot of people helping us. However, things change when Mitch Album came to the orphanage after the earthquake, and we started to have a chance at life.

Although I spent years that I could not go to school, I had always valued the process of being able to learn and to read and write. At the time when a school was not a possibility, I tried reading random books that I found around the yard; trying to make something out of them. I never taught that it was boring, but I always felt ashamed that I could not attend a school as many other children.

I started to think differently about my situation, and questioned God asking why am I not able to go to school, be a normal child? One day standing in front of our gate I watched kids going to school, seeing them gave me hope. They were rushing with their nice backpacks and shoes; it seemed like they were on their way to the most beautiful place on earth. Suddenly, one kid saw me watching him, he was probably 9 years old, and could see through me that I somehow envied his chance to go to school. He looked at me, and I gazed into his eyes hoping for a bit of sympathy, but he ridiculed me because he knew that I wanted some part of what he had. My heart sank and my world darkened, I close the gate feeling empty inside.

After that incident, I started to take control of my life, taking charge of what I can and leaving the rest in God's hand. I share this anecdote because it changed me and made me see things differently. I could not control my inability to go to school, but I could control my actions. I always love to make this analogy with things in life, just as we have some parts in our body that we cannot control like our circulatory system, and some parts we can control like our hands and mouth. I stopped feeling bitter for not being able to go to school and started controlling what I could. So, I started reading alone and learning how to write, while waiting for a chance to go to school.

Continued on next page



When Mitch Album became involved with the Orphanage, I started to have hope, and school was finally something that I would have the chance to have. Now that I had the opportunity to go to school, I did not take it lightly but did not give much thought to going to college when Mitch first started to talk to me about it until I realized that this could really happen. Something that I never imagined could happen and was being fulfilled.

When I heard that I was accepted at not one but two universities, I was surprised and the heart that sank for years was finally exploding with joy as the gloom of darkness that cloud my vision was lifted. Now, attending university in the U.S. was never my dream, but it will play part in my future, in what I want to do in life. The only thing that I am passionate about is to be able to help others in various ways, especially in my country, Haiti. I will not stop until I can, that is my vision. I came to the U.S. on August 8, 2018 and enrolled at Madonna University.

I know that the journey will be long and rough, but I keep my focus on the analogy that I made previously. I will control what I can and let God figure out the rest. I am blessed to be here, and I take my opportunity with all my heart to create something good out of it; not mainly for myself, but for those who really need help. Isn't this what we all must do with our lives? ■

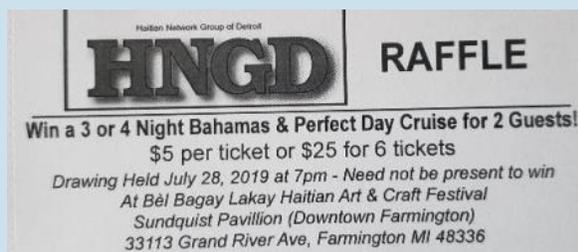
HNGD RAFFLE

Purchase your **ticket for a chance to win a Royal Caribbean cruise for two.**

\$5 per ticket or \$25 for 6 tickets.

For information, call 313-268-9250 or email info@hngd.org

Drawing to be held July 28, 2019 at 7pm at Bèl Bagay Lakay festival. Need not be present to win ■

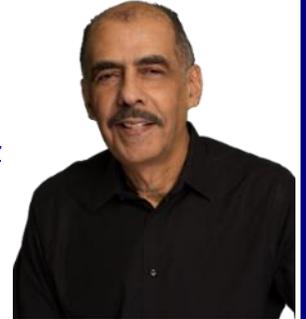


WRITING ABOUT HAITI

by *William G Herbert*
www.williamgherbert.com

April 16, 2019

As a U.S. born son of the Caribbean, I have always been fascinated by West Indian culture and traditions. My first novel, *A Place near the Front*, tells the story of my father's journey from his native Trinidad to the U.S. in the early 1900s in search of the American dream. When Belle-Janvier, my youngest and part-Haitian grandchild was born in 2015, my Caribbean cultural ties expanded. I knew my next novel would have to be set in the *Pearl of the Antilles*.



The Bones of Louverture, now complete and soon to be published, tells a story of events surrounding the fall of Haitian President-for-life Jean-Claude *Baby-Doc* Duvalier. The year is 1987 and vengeful mobs prowl the streets. Protest leader Sonny and his ambitious comrade, Jacques, battle voodoo traditions and government corruption but veer from their mission of reform and descend into a world of drugs, violence and crime. After setting up a narcotics pipeline to smuggle Colombian cocaine into the U.S., they become top Haitian drug lords. The abandonment of their initial sense of purpose and hopeful dreams, their quick rise to material wealth and subsequent decline mirror Haiti's own recurring cycles of disaster and disappointment and its struggles for rebirth and redemption.

Haiti presented a powerful setting for my story. Throughout its tumultuous history of natural disasters and political upheavals, it has struggled to achieve the promise of its heroic slave-revolt founding. With each new beginning there has been fresh hope that its dreams of full and prosperous nationhood might finally be achieved. But there has been much disappointment.

Haiti's attempt to rebuild following the fall of the Duvalier dynasty provided several intriguing story-telling elements. First there was the Faustian bargain struck by the new ruling class, the military, when it joined forces with South-American drug kingpin, Carlos Escobar, to make Haiti a conduit for the movement of Colombian cocaine to the U.S. My book character, Jacques Maurice, is loosely patterned after real-life Haitian drug-lord, Beaudoin Ketant, who helped set up the Colombian pipeline. Another aspect of the post-Duvalier era that created an atmosphere of danger and suspense was the state-sponsored terrorism embodied in the notorious *Tonton Macoute*, Papa-Doc's personal militia and extortion ring. Legendarily throughout the entire Carib-

Continued on next page



bean, it was his protection against real, potential and even imagined enemies. And finally there was voodoo, the ancient African religion that played such an important part in not only the post-Duvalier period, but in the entire Haitian experience. For generations, it has served as the unique filter through which many Haitians view and experience the world.

Much of the story's action takes place in Jérémie, an ancient port city in the southern peninsula. Known to many as the *City of Poets*, the location is important, not only because it was the home of such notable poets as Alexandre Dumas and Emile Roumer, but because, historically, it has also been known for its high concentration of voodoo practitioners, maybe the highest in all of Haiti. Many of the *Voodoo Wars* described in the book actually took place in Jérémie.

Redemption is an important sub-theme of my novel. Because of his grievous sins and lack of repentance, redemption is impossible for Jacques. Although there is hope for Sonny, absolution ultimately proves difficult for him, as it does for the nation itself. Haiti's own future may have been foretold by the unfortunate ends met by its revolutionary triumvirate: Toussaint Louverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Henri Christophe, comrades-in-arms in the 1791 slave revolution and the nation's first three presidents. Some believe the early and miserable deaths of these icons may have created the bad Karma that caused the unending cycle of disasters, coups, presidential murders and political power struggles that have plagued the ill-fated nation and its leaders.

Although I have written about the Caribbean in the past, authoring a novel about Haiti presented new challenges. Because my West-Indian family and social ties are principally in Trinidad, Martinique and Guadeloupe, and because I have only been in Haiti once some years ago, I had to fill in my knowledge gaps with extensive research. In addition to reading numerous books, research papers and periodicals on Haitian culture and history, I interviewed many Haitians. Even though my book is written in English, the dialog frequently incorporates Kreyòl. Since I am not a native speaker, I had to enlist Haitian expertise to ensure the proper phrasing.

Despite many challenges and a steep learning curve, writing *The Bones of Louverture* was a most enriching and rewarding project. I met new people and formed relationships within the Haitian Diaspora that I will always treasure. And I hope my novel will help my granddaughter to better understand and appreciate her Caribbean roots. I am most fortunate to have had the opportunity to write the book.

You can find out more about me and my writing from my [website](#) and my [blog](#). All of my books are accessible through my website. When the *Bones of Louverture* is published, I will announce it in the website. ■

CALLING THE MIDWEST HOME...

Serge JC Pierre-Louis, MD, MPH
President, DuSable Heritage



The DHA Board, from left to right: Nicolas Paul, Etzer Cantave, Marie Josee St. Preux (Treasurer), Courtney Pierre Joseph (Secretary), Serge JC Pierre-Louis (President), Frantz Dossous

Last year in September 2018, I travelled to Cleveland OH to attend the One World Festival at the Cleveland Gardens, upon the invitation of a group of friends living there. As I drove from Chicago, I wondered why I did not know about that festival having lived in Cleveland for six years. The festival itself was a true celebration of diversity where various ethnic groups representing different countries paraded along beautifully kept gardens and monuments, while displaying their music and national costumes and sharing their cuisine with visitors. Our small group of a dozen coming from Toledo, Detroit, Chicago and beyond proudly waived Haitian flags.

When we sat down later at a Dominican restaurant for dinner, it became obvious to us that our getting together was actually the most important part of the day. Why did we not know about each other, after being in the Midwest for so long? We pledged to keep in touch and to visit each other in our home states as much as possible. I extended an invitation to the group to attend our annual DuSable Heritage Gala in March 2019 in Chicago.

Over the following weeks, I had the pleasure of conversing with members and leaders of several Haitian organizations in Detroit MI, Columbus OH, Indianapolis IN and Louisville KY representing microcosms of Haitian culture across the Midwest. They all had one goal in common, to maintain a bond between themselves and with their culture. On 9 March 2019, we were fortunate to receive at our gala in Chicago two prominent leaders of the *Haitian Networking Group of Detroit (HNGD)* namely Margareth Corkery and Shirley Alce Konate, respectively President and Vice-President of that organization. We also welcomed representatives from Cleveland, Toledo, Milwaukee and Indianapolis.

About 250 years ago, a Haitian man made the journey from St. Marc to Illinois, married a local

Continued on next page



Native-American Potawatomi woman, became a successful fur trader and founded what we now call Chicago. *DuSable Heritage Association (DHA)*, created nearly 18 years ago, took as its mission to celebrate that feat and the memory of the first Chicago couple, Jean-Baptiste and Kittihawa Pointe DuSable while advocating for the future DuSable Park located at the confluence of the Chicago River and Lake Michigan. As Haitians scattered across the Midwest, we have the opportunity to claim DuSable as our own by promoting his recognition as the Founder of Chicago, by demanding construction of DuSable Park with a Haitian and Native-American presence on it, by celebrating the annual DuSable Day on 4 March (date of incorporation of Chicago as a city) and by participating in the annual wreath-laying ceremony to commemorate the anniversary of the death of DuSable in August. We can do so while being inclusive and welcoming everybody, Haitians and non-Haitians, who share the same passion.

As we celebrate the spirit of DuSable together and support each other, Haitians and Haitian-Americans, we can create a resilient network of organizations across the Midwest that will strengthen us and increase our well-being. I am encouraged and grateful that our friends in Michigan, Ohio and Indiana have started this process.

I take this opportunity to thank Margareth and Shirley of HNGD for their participation in our annual gala 2019. I invite everyone to our annual DuSable Commemoration on Saturday 24 August 2019, when we lay flowers at the DuSable statue downtown Chicago and give a free tour of the DuSable Founders Trail along the Chicago River to DuSable Park. I also invite our friends across the Midwest to our next annual DHA Gala on Saturday 7 March 2020, for another exciting evening with Jean-Baptiste and Kittihawa. Please visit our website at "dusableheritage.org" for updated information. ■

HNGD FIRST NETWORKING EVENT

On **March 30**, Nacks Restaurant was filled to capacity when we gathered for the 1st HNGD Networking event of the year.



The atmosphere was relaxed and convivial as we sat down to enjoy the Haitian inspired meal prepared by Chef Christian Noël. We were ecstatic to welcome old friends and

forge new friendships! Mr. and Mrs. Roudy Rousseau who are long time Michigan residents met up with their friends from Ohio: Mr. Nicolas Paul and Mr. and Mrs. Eric Guillod. Jonathan Paul, a student at U of D Jesuit who hails from Haiti, brought along his American family Mr. and Mrs. Casalou. Mr. Devin Mason also made a special trip from the west side for the opportunity to network with us.

A good time was had by all and it was unanimously agreed that the experience was worth repeating. ■

EDWIDGE DANTICAT

On **April 11**, HNGD members attended a lecture by Edwidge Danticat at the Museum of Art on the U of M campus.

After the presentation, a small group of HNGD members met with Ms. Danticat and spent a great deal of time talking to her and her family members, Savary and Cynthia Boyer and their children, who live in Jackson (MI). Ms. Danticat was welcoming and gracious. As we were commiserating about the fact that she did not get a chance to meet all the members of our community, she promised that she will let us know ahead of time of her next visit, to allow us to give her a proper Michigan Welcome.



Edwidge Danticat is a 2009 MacArthur fellow and the author of several books, including *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, an Oprah Book Club selection, and *Krik? Krak!*, a National Book Award finalist. She is also the editor of *The Butterfly's Way: Voices from the Haitian Diaspora in the United States*, Best American Essays 2011, and has written six books for children and young adults, including *Anacaona*, *Behind the Mountains*, and *Eight Days*. Her memoir, *Brother, I'm Dying*, was a 2007 finalist for the National Book Award and a 2008 winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for autobiography. *The Art of Death: Writing the Final Story*, published in 2017, was nominated for the National Book Critics Circle Award for Criticism. ■



CALLING ALL FUN-LOVING MICHIGANDERS!

On Saturday July 20, HNGD will march in the Farmington Founders Parade. We are looking for marchers of all ages to join us and have a good time while advertising for the Bèl Bagay Lakay Festival. Don't miss the opportunity to let the community at large know that there is a strong Haiti-Michigan connection in the area. The 40+ people who participated last year will tell you that the whole family will enjoy it!

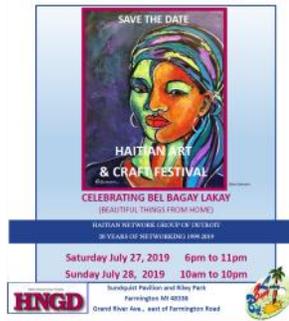
Our theme for this year is Pirates of the Caribbean. Straight from the Island of Tortuga, off the coast of Haiti, the loot will include swords, gemstones, gold coins, treasure chests, etc. You name it, we will have it!

Ahoy Mattey! Let's get together and help Farmington discover the treasures of Haiti. Aaarr!

For more information call 248-231-5767 ■

BEAUTIFUL THINGS FROM HOME ARE HEADING YOUR WAY

On Saturday July 27 (6pm to 11pm) and Sunday July 28 (11am to 10pm), Downtown Farmington will welcome HNGD for the 3rd edition of the biennial art and craft festival Bèl Bagay Lakay.



We are proud to announce that once again this activity will be supported by the Michigan Council for Arts & Cultural Affairs (MCACA) Minigrant Program, administered by CultureSource. MCACA believes that our state's arts and cultural scene are important and that they can bring quality-of-life to our communities and even help the economy thrive.

Although we have had great success the previous years, the committee is not sitting on its laurels. Once again we are pushing the envelope and trying to make the event more appealing than the previous years by adding an extra layer to the already rich program and making a concerted effort to bring products that reflect the aesthetic as well as the plurality of the talent among Haitian artists and artisans. In addition to the colorful and beautiful paintings, festival goers will get a chance to purchase hand-made jewelry, sandals, metal and wearable art and many items at an affordable price.

The festival entertainment line-up will offer something for everyone: young and old, Haitians and non-Haitians. Thanks to a grant received from Farmington & Farmington Hills

Foundation for Youth and Families (FFHFYF), the young ones will have the unique opportunity to hear Haitian Folktales through the magical art of **Charlot Lucien, a Master Storyteller from Boston**. FFHFYF supports programs and provide funds to improve the quality of life for children, youth and families in need within the communities of Farmington and Farmington Hills. The dance and drumming sessions will get the public to clap their hands, move their feet and wanting more even after the *rara* parade. The kids will once again learn to play games and make kites the same way their counterparts do it in Haiti. For the Kompa lovers, **J. Perry's music** will bring the right amount of "chalè" to create the party atmosphere. Zumba adepts don't be surprised if you hear some familiar tunes! Last but not least, the **fashion show by Soledad Couture** will bring the fashionista out of all of us.

All this would not have been possible without the support of our Event Partner Royal Caribbean International, along with the following entities: DTE Energy Foundation, Ascension Providence, Dr. Jean Alcè, New Light Recovery Center, Evolve Bank Trust, Madonna University, the Consulate General of Haiti in Chicago, State Representative Christine Greig, JoeMar Travel, Carmina Mevs, Magesco, Caribbean Community Service Center, Corkery Appraisal Services, Kola Restaurant & Ultra Lounge and the Chrysler Motor Citizens Volunteers.

The 2019 Bèl Bagay Lakay Festival Committee: Shirley Alcè Konaté, Régine Beauboeuf, Jennifer Berkemeier, Andréle Brutus, Maggy Corkery (Chair), Alain Desvallons Mentor, Kristina Graham, Carinne Hails, Janny Magloire Milton, Bill McNeece, Valerie McNeece, Carmina Mevs, Fritz Momplaisir, Soledad Nelson. ■

HNGD STILL NEEDS YOU!

We are looking for individuals who would like to help increase the organization's visibility and strengthen the Haitian presence in Metro Detroit.

We welcome everyone regardless of age, race, gender or nationality. All that's required is a strong love for Haiti and the desire to help others discover and appreciate the richness and the uniqueness of the Haitian culture.

There are several ways that you can help:

- ◆ **Become a member**, the annual membership fee is only \$35 and you can pay for it on the HNGD website. Students can join for free!
- ◆ **Volunteer at the 2019 Bèl Bagay Lakay Festival Committee.** Volunteers are essential to the success of the festival. Send us an email at info@haitiannetworkdetroit.org.
- ◆ **Participate in the Farmington Founders Parade on July 20.** Help us spread the word about the festival. Remember it's a free event for the whole family! ■

THANK YOU



The gift of time, a donation of oneself, is priceless. Knowing that, the Haitian community of Detroit owes each and every one of you a debt of gratitude, and Zanmi Detroit, on its behalf salutes, applauds and thanks you for your dedicated service.

Thank you to the individuals who have served on the Board of HNGD:

- Shirley Alcé Konaté: President, Vice President
- Catherine Auguste Dauphin: Vice President
- Molly Cahill: Secretary
- Reynold Charles: Vice President, Treasurer
- Maggy Corkery: President, Vice President, Secretary
- Maxceau Cylla- Treasurer
- Rosario Danier : President, Vice President, Treasurer, Zanmi Detroit Editor
- Mylla Danjou Aslsobrooks : Treasurer
- Danielle Desroches: Secretary
- Alain Desvallons-Mentor : Secretary
- Kathy Doucet : Secretary
- Bécel Dubreuze : Treasurer
- Dr. Jean-Claude Dutès : Vice President, Zanmi Detroit Editor
- Pierre-Richard Lamarre : Vice President
- Janny Magloire Milton : Treasurer
- Fritz Momplaisir : President
- Dr. Soledad Nelson : President, Vice President
- Dr. Bens Sandaire: Secretary

THE 2019 BÈL BAGAY LAKAY FESTIVAL SPONSORS



Corkery Appraisal Services LLC



Soledad Couture®



THANK YOU!!!