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Zanmi Detroit

EDITOR'S GREETING



Hello again,
Welcome back. I hope you and your family are well and safe and are looking forward to the rest of this year with great eagerness. The virus is aging into endemic status,

and there is anticipation of moving out of the tunnel into the light. In this issue, you will learn about the composition of HNGD's new Board of Directors, find a reflective article on selected world events, discover where former Michigan residents are and what they are doing, mourn the passing of acquaintances, old friends and loved ones, and read about news of past and future events in our community, specially our much anticipated fourth Bel Bagay Lakay festival. If you lost someone dear to you due to COVID or to some other conditions since our last publication, please accept our condolences.

With great regrets, I am sharing the news of the passing of one of my closest friends and former spouse, **Margareth Th. Dutès**, last November after a courageous battle with a difficult illness. An alumna of St Rose de Lima and Hunter College, she actively assisted in the nineteen nineties in the resettlement in central Michigan of our fellow countrymen and women running from political repression and social unrest. Reserved at first, those of you who were acquainted with her surely remember her generosity and warmth. May her soul rest in peace as our son Jean-Paul and I, still reeling from the unexpected blow caused by the death, try to regain our footing by seeking strength from the memory of her courage.



November 24, 1955 –
November 18, 2021

Jean-Claude Dutès, Ph.D., Editor
Retired Clinical Neuropsychologist ■

BÈL BAGAY LAKAY FESTIVAL

GET READY FOR THE BÈL BAGAY LAKAY HAITIAN ARTS AND CRAFTS FESTIVAL IN FARMINGTON!

The summer of 2022 will be filled with excitement as we unroll the 4th edition of the Bèl Bagay Lakay Haitian Art and Crafts festival. This event is solely about celebrating the fabulous things Haiti has to offer. The concept came about out of the desire to change the negative narrative about Haiti and show that despite her problems our "Ayiti Cheri" has many treasures that deserve to be uncovered. For those of us who grew up there, it's no secret that Haiti has more to offer than the depressing pictures that we see in the media; as an organization, we felt compelled to do something about it and play a part, although small, in changing Michiganders' opinion about a land that we hold so dear in our hearts. For us, it is particularly important to give the young Haitian Americans in our area a reason to be proud of their roots and an opportunity to show it publicly.

Since the beginning of the year, the 16-member Festival Committee has been busy feverishly laying the groundwork for this long-awaited event. Riley Park and Sundquist Pavilion, the little jewels nestled in the center of Downtown Farmington, will once again welcome Haiti's biggest fans on July 30th and 31st, with the blessing of the Farmington City Council. Something new this year... A pre-festival event that will take place on July 29, at Kola Lounge. Get ready for an evening of "Lodyans" and laughter with Charlot Lucien, the hilariously entertaining storyteller from Boston, whose material will entertain both Creole and English

Continued on next page

speakers.

In terms of programming for Bèl Bagay Lakay, things are moving in the right direction. The headliner, Mikaben, has already been confirmed as well as some returning performers like Gérald Joanis the explosive folkloric dancer from Jacmel (Haiti), and of course our local talents like Master Drummer Geraud Dimanche and the Ypsilanti based musical duo Enos Fabre and Chris Patterson. As with the previous years, the young ones will find plenty of activities to keep them entertained: storytelling, art and craft workshops, drumming session, etc. In addition to the visual artists that usually make the bulk of the festival's exhibitors, this year we are making every effort possible to diversify the products that will be offered. It's not a simple task to have exhibitors come directly from Haiti; yet, our networking efforts have paid off! We are so excited about the prospect of having at least three artisans join us from Haiti. Two of whom, Martine Chateigne from Simplement Macha and Christelle Chignard Paul from Atelier Calla, are being sponsored by La Fondation Barbancourt. Yes! You read correctly! Rhum Barbancourt will send some ambassadors to Farmington. Indeed, many beautiful things will await you at the Bèl Bagay Lakay Festival!

This event is free; in other words, it does not generate any income for the organization. As one can imagine, a festival of this magnitude does not become a reality without significant backing. We are so excited about the amount of support we have received thus far. DTE Foundation, Michigan Art and Culture Council and Michigan Humanities have all responded to our request for funding. Since HNGD Board members first crossed paths with DTE Foundation's President, Lynette Dowler, she has not stopped believing in the importance of the festival and what it represents for Metro Detroit. As the recipient of its beneficence for the second time in a row, HNGD can attest to the fact that DTE Foundation truly champions diversity and inclusion for all Metro Detroit communities. Not to be outdone, Michigan Arts and Culture Council (MACC) has also been associated with Bèl Bagay Lakay from the very beginning; as it has been the case in the past, the 2022 Minigrant Program is being administered by CultureSource. MACC plays a crucial role in our region as it bestows grants to arts and cultural organizations to ensure that every citizen in Michigan enjoys the civic, economic and educational benefits of being exposed to arts and culture. The next entities to play an essential role in this year's festival are Michigan Humanities with its Bridging Michigan grant, the Farmington & Farmington Hills Foundation for Youth & Families and Madonna University. We also want to recognize Henry Ford Global Health and Caribbean Community Service Center who are also supporting the festival. While more financial backing is needed to ensure that the Bèl Bagay Lakay Festival is more fabulous than ever, these funding opportunities are providing HNGD the resources necessary to bridge the divide between Metro Detroit's communities and present the Haitian culture to Michiganders in a positive way.

But wait, what about you, HNGD members and supporters? We know you are dying to get involved in the only Haitian Art and Crafts Festival in town!!! Well, here is your chance...**You can contribute to the success of Bèl Bagay Lakay in a number of ways:**

1. **Join a subcommittee or volunteer during the festival.**

For more info, call Carmina at 973-517-7929

2. **Spread the word about Bèl Bagay Lakay;** post the fliers on social media or share them with your friends. This festival is not just for Haitians! Remember, our goal is to change the narrative about Haiti; the more people know about it, the better.
3. **Help us find sponsors, not just businesses.** Families or a group of friends can put their resources together to sponsor the festival. For more information, call Janny at 248-514-6494.
4. **Participate with HNGD in the Farmington Founders parade.** It's the best way to let others know that there is a Haitian presence in Metro Detroit. Adults and children are welcome to walk with us as a group in the July 16th parade in Downtown Farmington. It's a fun way to advertise for the festival. We are also looking for young people who would like to perform a dance. For more information call Jinette at 734-883-5535.

Many people have already committed to make this event a success and I would like to thank them for the great teamwork and for their dedication: Edouard Edeline, Gracie Xavier, the festival committee members: Jennifer Berkemeier, Danielle Desroches, Cassandra Baptiste, Lise-Pauline Barnett, Réjane Pierre Tyler, Wilbert Fils-Aimé, Soledad Nelson, Bill and Valerie MacNeece, Bedel Desruisseaux, Carmina Mevs, Eric Guilliod, Catherine Auguste, Cynthia Greig, Jinette Chapman and of course my fellow HNGD Board members: Shirley Alcé Konaté, Janny Magloire Milton and Alain Desvallons Mentor.

Now that you have all the information, we are looking forward to having you join the Bèl Bagay Lakay team!

Nou paka pala! You gotta be there!

Maggy Corkery ■

2021 HNGD ELECTION RESULTS

On November 28 and December 12, the Election Committee organized and oversaw the election of Board members. In accordance with the organization's By-Laws, only due-paying members were eligible to receive a ballot and vote. Running unopposed the current Board won re-election, with some members shifting to different positions. Both Alain Desvallons Mentor and Janny Magloire Milton kept their original position as secretary and treasurer, respectively. Margareth Corkery exchanged the presidency for the vice presidency with Shirley Alcé-Konaté. A deep thank you to Régine Condé Beauboeuf, Carine Hails, Marie Soledad Nelson, Andréle Brutus St. Val and Eldora Stevens, who as members of the election Committee, tirelessly worked to facilitate a smooth transfer of power.

In summary, **HNGD new board of officers is as follows:**

- **President- Shirley Alcé-Konaté**
- **Vice President- Margareth Corkery**
- **Secretary - Alain Desvallons-Mentor**
- **Treasurer- Janny Magloire Milton** ■



WHERE ARE THEY NOW ?



SAYING GOODBYE TO 2021 AND GROWING INTO 2022

By Jessica Lamarre

Here we are. Getting ready for the year ahead. Some of us wait with anticipation, looking forward to a new beginning, a new chance to start over and set new goals. Some of us look at the new year with indifference, not really looking forward to what is to come ahead. Considering what we've experienced thus far with the unfortunate events related to the coronavirus, those feelings are valid. Either way, time does not slow down so "here we are!"

For me, regarding my feelings for this coming year, I look at it with anticipation. The new year always seems to bring a sense of new opportunity and ways to reinvent. It's like the half-time point in a sports game where you can reflect and make all the half-time adjustments necessary for the rest of the game ahead. I am ready to explore these opportunities and make the adjustments. To adjust, one must reflect on the current year, explore moments of growth and moments of setbacks. I have experienced both.

For many of you who don't know, my passion is to perform. I have loved the Performing Arts for some years now and have been pursuing it. I suffered many losses during the pandemic season, so I was over it lol... Compared to the year before, this year started with much optimism, and I was ready to take off and purge all of this "stay at home" energy. It started with new doors opening. I became a brand ambassador for Fabletics (a workout clothing brand). My love for acting was reignited by being asked to be a part of an Amazon series called "Slay" and I flew out to Baltimore, Maryland for 10 days to film. Although I dabbled in acting throughout high school and a bit after, this experience was new and scary because I was in a city by myself with people I didn't know. Overall, it was well received. I really enjoyed it and learned quite a few things. Between filming, during a break, I took a train up to New York to perform my music for Haitian Heritage Day. I was not only able to celebrate Haiti with fellow Haitians but also able to see and spend time with my family and perform with one of my childhood favorite Haitian singers Alan Cavé! "Se pa pou dat!!"

When I got back to Los Angeles, I signed with a commercial agency, which was something I had been pursuing for years. I also picked up a new job as an administrative assistant, which has blessed me in so many ways. It allowed me to have the flexibility I needed for my career, it helped me grow and learn, and it kept me busy during the off season but also gave me the opportunity to work for a boss that I respect and love!

I've had dry moments this year as well, like auditioning and auditioning for commercials under my agency and getting all "NOs," my friend losing his father, whom we all loved, to Covid, and getting a positive test result for Covid, which I dreaded and avoided since this pandemic started. At first, I was scared but I found comfort in knowing that by that time, I had been vaccinated, so my symptoms in comparison to not having the vaccine were not as dreadful. The hardest part

was having to coddle up once again in my home away from the people I was used to being around. The good news is that at least by this time I was in a new apartment away from roommates. Which leads me to my next transition.

During the last month of the year, I took on the big transition of moving into my own apartment! Although scary and risky, I did it! I stepped out on faith. This month also brought my first YES for a commercial audition, and I booked a photoshoot with KIA, the car company, the same week as my birthday! What a present! I cried with tears of joy when I got the news! A little hope and the tenacity to not give up goes a long way! For all the dreamers out there, I encourage you to keep going. All the small and big wins I've had this last year make all the setbacks worth it and help me look forward to a continued streak of opportunities coming. This year I learned that if you want something, put in the work, go get it, and God will make a way. Keep the faith, reach for the stars, and may your 2022 be blessed and filled with joy and happiness!

Love,

Jessica Lamarre ■



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!

CONGRATULATIONS DANIE AND MARIE CARMEL!



Geraud Dimanche is pleased to announce the graduation of his daughters, **Danie Dimanche and Marie Carmel Dimanche**. Danie received her degree, Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education, from Wayne State University on December 14. Marie Carmel received her degree, Bachelor of Science in Health Science, from Oakland University on December 17. ■



Nou paka pala! You gotta be there!

July 30th—31st, 2022

Bèl Bagay Lakay

Arts & Crafts Festival

Farmington Riley Park & Sundquist Pavilion



COMMENTARY

REFLECTIONS ON SELECTED CURRENT EVENTS

*By Jean-Claude Dutès, Ph.D.
Licensed Psychologist
Clinical neuropsychologist*



THE VIRUS AND US



So far it has been quite a year. The pandemic is still lingering on, with new variants sprouting in different spots of the world. Mother Nature in its wisdom is reminding us of what a daunting task it is to kill an invisible but pernicious microbe. The pandemic has coerced us into humility while also inducing us to be more flexible. For many of us, there have been new vistas, a reprioritization of life values and a reappraisal of the material life. Our connections to others have taken front and center place again: in an acutely distressful time we had to find ways both to fear and to seek the comfort of others in a delicate balance between approaching and withdrawing. The acute phase of the pandemic reminded me of Jean-Paul Sartre's "l'enfer c'est les autres," or "hell is others." We were always on guard in a state of almost constant vigilance as everyone we came across was a potential infectious agent, a death threat.

The pandemic restricted touch at a time when our stress level was at its highest, which further increased our discomfort. It has long been established that touch is critical for our normal psychological development and has beneficial effects on our mental and physical health. Research into the effects of touch has revealed that it decreases anxiety, depression and reduces the levels of the stress hormone cortisol in the blood stream.



In a paradoxical way, "le paradis, c'est aussi les autres," or "paradise is others also." Think about the reassuring and comforting feeling you get from a desired hug and the euphoria brought on by the touch of a loved one. Yes, it is time to reconnect.

HAÏTI'S MALAISE

Winston Churchill once stated that "you can count on America to do everything else first, except what is right." Reading this made me think of Haïti and its never-ending struggle to achieve a peaceful transition of power and build a country inclusive of all of its citizens. We Haitians, whether in Haiti or in the diaspora seem to do everything, except what is right when it pertains to elections Haiti.

We seem stuck in an adolescent blame game, with no one accepting any responsibility. Growing up in Haiti under the Duvalier regime, I thought I was living in the best country of the world. In my teens in the United States, I learned about the darker side of the regime and the squalor of our politics. There was an answer, though. It was all Duvalier's fault; the army put him in power through rigged elections. Once we get rid of him, Haiti will thrive again.



After Jean Bertrand Aristide was elected in 1990, in what most voting right organizations judged to be the most credible elections ever held in Haiti's history, the opposition and the US State Department saw his popularity as a threat to democracy as this this would, according to them, interfere with the alternation of power. Aristide himself, in a second election while in power and still popular wanted it all -- having won a comfortable majority in parliament was not enough -- he wanted near total control. That was like adding fuel to a small fire. With cries for a new social contract, the business sector and significant sections of the middle class with strong backing from the international community, mainly the US, France and Canada set out to sabotage Aristide's government. In vain he tried to reach a deal with the opposition and placate the international community, but they wanted him gone. Three years into his term, in February 2004, Haiti suffered her third military occupation spear headed by the US who then transferred the mis-

Continued on page 2



sion to the United Nations. The opposition got rid of Aristide, but their celebration was short-lived. To their consternation the international community turned to one of its own: a man from the diaspora named Gerard Latortue to become prime minister and run a transitional government. Haitian politicians and the international community love transitional governments for Haiti. As they say in Haiti this was a classic case of “byen konte mal kalkule” or “well counted but miscalculated” by the opposition. Emotional reasoning often leads to unintended nefarious consequences. By the way, the current de facto prime minister, who lived outside of Haiti for many years and thus is from the diaspora was part of a “conseil de sages” or council of the wise that was supposed to govern with the prime minister. Haitians in the diaspora can no more save Haiti than Haitians in Haiti. Rather, the salvation of Haiti rests in what is in our heads and in the contents of our character.

In 2012, the international community became unabashedly embroiled in our elections again, with the United Nations and the US government selecting Michel Martelly as the next president, moving his party from the third to second position he became eligible for the runoff elections, and with their backing he easily won. Martelly was forced to resign within a few months of the end of his term and held only one election during his term. Although he is blamed for the lack of elections, the opposition to his government refused to work with him to form the electoral council that would be responsible for to hold elections. After difficult and protracted negotiations, another provisional electoral council was formed. In 2016, Jovenel Moise was elected president. The opposition cried foul and demanded a new election claiming fraud. A year later in a second election, he was elected again with the same proportion of votes. Then the opposition called foul, claiming that the election lacked legitimacy because the percentage of voters relative to eligible voters was too low. Yet, no one was forced or coerced into not voting. Of interest, the opposition claiming legitimacy had 45% of the total votes, while 55% of those who voted chose Jovenel. When they could not force him to resign, and after persistent effort to destabilize the country, the opposition, which claimed that Jovenel was the problem and promised that order and security would be restored after his departure from power, had him assassinated.



Now, nine months after his death, and with many of the most vocal critics of Jovenel as members of the transitional government, Haiti has descended into chaos and anarchy. Of course, someone must be responsible. Jovenel is gone, who is the problem. All of a sudden, it is the organized armed thugs, whom they used to claim were under the control of the assassinated president’s government. Now that they have found the culprits, you would think that they would act swiftly and

establish order and security. That would be too easy. Instead, it is suspected that some members of the opposition and of the business sector may be in cahoots with them. Engaged in a massive deception, the opposition is saying now that elections cannot be held because of insecurity.

What a vicious circle! Our problem lies in the arrested moral development of a large segment of Haiti leaders that is undermining our ability to play fair, and which generates and sustains desires for fraudulently acquired wealth. To want good and fair elections, the willingness to win must be tempered by the ability to accept losing. Winning at any cost or sabotaging the winner has become our preferred strategies of political combat. Among Haitians, this is known as the “cockroach strategy.” In other words, “if I can eat the meal, I am going to spoil it.”

Yet, I am hopeful that Haiti can and will change and grow over time as we reflect more on our habits and ways of thinking. We are a young nation, and nation building takes time. Coming from diverse warring ethnic groups in Africa, Haiti was shaped in the crucible of slavery. My purpose here is to call attention to what we are doing to ourselves and to encourage us to search for a better alternative to the “cockroach strategy.”

BULLIES ARE AT IT AGAIN



My heart goes to the Ukraine people, and I hope that its leaders truly have the best interest of the country in their hearts and minds. The news of the invasion brought back painful memories of imperialist aggression on our continent. The US and western press would have us believe that the problem is President Putin or Russia. I think it is more complicated than that. Ukraine has become a pawn in a geopolitical struggle between the US and western Europe and Russia. Now it is Russia who has done the invading and doing the bombing. But I can still vividly remember where I was on Wednesday October 25, 1983, when the United States invaded tiny Grenada, which is about twice the size of Staten Island, New York, with a massive force. The United States was concerned that Cuba was helping Grenada build an airport and a hospital and worried about the positive effects this would create in other countries in the Caribbean and Latin America. Cuba because of its alliance with the Soviet Union could not be allowed to do anything good. To invade or attack Cuba could have triggered a war with the Soviet Union. It was easier and safer to attack Grenada who did not even have a real army. To cover their aggression, the Reagan administration claimed falsely that



American medical students were held or were at risk of being held hostage.



Another painful memory is the invasion of Panama on December 20, 1989, under the administration of George Bush senior. To justify the invasion, it claimed that the US government was executing an arrest warrant against the ruler of Panama, General Manuel Noriega, who had lost the Bush's administration's favor due to his indictment in the US for involvement in drug trafficking. In a documentary titled the Panama deception, it is revealed that the US government had access to Noriega and even helped freed him from arrest in an attempted coup against his government within weeks of the invasion. If they wanted to arrest him, they could have done so then. Instead, the US assaulted Panama with 27,684 troops and over 300 hundred aircraft to "arrest" a general who had an army of 16,000 soldiers, with vastly inferior equipment and training, displacing, detaining, wounding, and killing several hundred Panamanian soldiers and civilians.



According to the documentary, the invasion was to destroy the Panamanian army so that US forces would continue to have a reason to be in Panama in order to keep the canal under US control. With the destruction of the Panamanian armed forces, Panama could no longer meet one of the clauses of the treaty ceding it operational and military control of the canal. In the absence of the Panamanian army whose job it would be to defend and protect the canal. With the decimation of the Panamanian army the US and the new Panamanian government arranged for the US military to maintain its presence in Panama and to assume the mission of protecting and defending the canal.



In a commendable gesture, the current Panamanian government knowing the heavy price that the Panamanian people paid during the illegal invasion has decreed that as of December 20, 2022, December 20 will be an annual national holiday to commemorate the death of Panamanian civilians killed during the US invasion.

In the international arena "might makes right." Remember the deception about Iraq having weapons of mass destruction to justify the second Iraq war! And now Russia says it wants to "de-nazify" Ukraine. How noble? Duplicity, treachery, and misrepresentations have always been tools used by the powerful against the weak to justify their aggression.

Through this piece I am saying to the American administration that we are watching and that we will hold it as accountable as the Russians when they engage in bullying behavior.

For Ukraine's sake I am hoping for a quick cessation of hostilities within the near future. In this deadly game, Ukraine has more to lose than either Russia or the US and its Western European allies, and I align my sympathy with the Ukrainian people. More importantly, I am very concerned over the possibility that this "game of chicken" might deteriorate into a wider conflict that could lead to a nuclear war. ■



IN MEMORIAM



Edelfride Civilus

November 25, 1941 - February 10, 2022

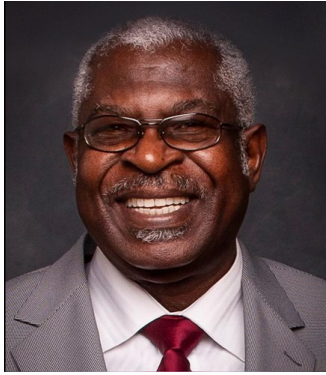


It is with a heavy heart that we announce the death of Edelfride Civilus, mother of Nirva Civilus, who died peacefully on February 10, 2022. Known to many of us as "Gertrude" or "Frida," she was a beautiful flower that now blooms in eternity. ■

Continued on next page



Julio Desir



Our community has lost yet another one of its pillars. Julio Desir will no longer entertain us with his jokes or his great dance moves with his beloved wife Mona. Nevertheless, he will remain forever in our hearts where he has left an indelible mark. Please keep Mona, Julio Jr. Cassie, Maggie, Jonathan and all the grandchildren in your prayers.

There will be a Celebration of Life service for family and friends on Julio's birthday, July 22, 2022, in Redford, Michigan (details to come).■



AU REVOIR FATHER SOUFFRANT!



Mourning the loss of a great man

by *Maggy Corkery*

Have you ever mourned the death of someone that you never met? In general, every person lost is mourned by a person with whom they had a meaningful relationship. Recently I experienced quite the opposite. I learned about the existence of Father Claude Souffrant less than a month before he passed away. Denise Peters a Regis-

Fr. Claude Souffrant, S.J.

tered Nurse at the Columbiere [Jesuit Retirement Community](#) had contacted HNGD in the hope that we could connect members of the Haitian community with Father Souffrant who was ill, but whose face, according to her, "always glows whenever anyone speaks of the people of Haiti whom he served and loved."

I naturally agreed to help out. The plan was for Nurse Peters to obtain the proper permission that would allow visitors to the compound in spite of the restrictions around COVID-19. On February 25, out of the blue, I felt compelled to contact Columbiere. The caregiver that I spoke to was so excited when I told her I was calling from the Haitian community that she immediately put Father Souffrant on the line. Although his answers were not very clear as a result of a stroke, I kept talking and I promised him that he would soon receive a visit from some representatives from the Haitian commu-

nity.

To my astonishment, the next day I received an email from Denise Peters announcing that Father Souffrant had passed away at 3 am, during the Hour of Mercy. Upon learning the news, a feeling of sadness washed over me, as if I had lost a dear friend. Yet, I never got a chance to meet him. Just as it was the case for Father Souffrant, Haiti holds a special place in my heart; I understood his longing for going back there to spend his last days or to be in contact with anything or anybody that reminded him of *Ayiti Cheri*.

I felt sad that we did not get a chance to bring him a piece of Haiti with some *lodyans* in Creole; I felt sad that his last wish to go back home did not materialize; and I felt sad that he did not get to see his compatriots before he passed away. Unbeknownst to Nurse Peters and me, Father Souffrant had many friends in our community. Dr. Guerrin Montilus a childhood friend, Adeline Auguste, Dr. and Mrs. Jean Alc  and Shirley Konat  had all visited Father Souffrant in the past, until COVID-19 raised its ugly head.

As I sat in the Chapel during the funeral service, the feeling of sadness came back; but this time I felt sad for me, because I had missed out. I did not have the opportunity to meet a great man who had so much to offer. As I looked around me, I started feeling grateful that Father Souffrant had been lucky to be surrounded by colleagues and staff at Columbiere who genuinely cared about him and tried their utmost to bring him some happiness during his last days on this earth. Nurse Peters particularly stands out for her dedication. She was so happy that I responded to her first email to HNGD about Father Souffrant, that she immediately donated some funds to the organization.

Below is the eulogy that was sent to HNGD by Nurse Denise Peters, staff at Columbiere Jesuit Retirement Community

Fr. Claude Souffrant, S.J., was born on May 6, 1933 in the Municipality of Croix-des-Bouquets, just outside of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, to the late Princeton and Emma (M risier) Souffrant. He was the youngest of their four children, the Marie Andr e, Jeanine, and Joseph Antonio G rard Souffrant. In the United States, he is survived by his nephew, Mr. Leslie Souffrant and his wife Dr. Nancy Ve ra Souffrant, and their sons, Christopher and Derrick Souffrant.

Fr. Claude was ordained to the priesthood for the archdiocese of Port-au-Prince on June 29, 1959, at the Cath drale of Notre-Dame-du-Perp tuel-Secours of Port-au-Prince. He entered the Society of Jesus on January 22, 1965 at Notre-Dame-de-Monserrat in Saint-J r me, Q.C., and professed final vows on July 31, 1989.

He earned a doctorate in Sociology from La Sorbonne in Par-

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is, and was a highly published scholar, well known sociologist and respected university professor in Haiti, Senegal, and the United States. He was founder and director of École Saint-Ignace in Port-au-Prince from 1996 to 2008. From 1996-2018. In addition, he did extensive pastoral work in New York, Chicago, and Clarmat, France, often with Haitian immigrants. Because of health needs, he became a member of the Columbiere Jesuit Community outside Detroit in 2018 where he remained until he died on January 26, 2022, just shy of a much-anticipated and scheduled return to his beloved homeland people the following month.

He had a great mind and an even greater spirit living out of a genuine humility, grounded in his love of the Lord. He was a much loved and respected member in each community he served or in which he lived, was always gracious to those who assisted him, and always shared a smile that could warm any room or exchange. Even in his infirmity, he was a man of fidelity and prayer, celebrating the Eucharist, praying the rosary and Litany of the Sacred Heart with devotion. ■



Mr. Félix Léonard

It's with heavy heart that I announce the passing of my dad, my hero, my best friend Félix Léonard. My father taught me strong moral values. He taught me personal responsibility. He taught me honesty and trust, he taught me to be compassionate and to respect all life. He taught me the value of education, he taught me how to play and enjoy sports, he taught me how to make good decisions in life. He taught me to have fun and to laugh, he taught me the meaning of work, and he taught me the meaning of love. He did this by being a nurturing father, a firm disciplinarian, a hard and dedicated worker, and a loving parent.

My father was one who was there to share with me in times of joy and in times of hardship. These examples and the great memories I share with my father are everlasting and have positively influenced my life like no one else could have.

I know from my father and my experiences growing up how much it means to be the best father you can be for your children.

Thank you for the tremendous sacrifices you've made for us. Love you and miss you so much!



By Herve Léonard ■

COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS



WELCOME ADELE!

Henry and Andrele St. Val are happy to announce the birth of their baby girl, Adele. Both parents and Big Sister Alexandra (Ms. Haiti and Ms. Carival 2018) are ecstatic about the new addition. Sadly, the family has relocated to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to support Andrele's new position at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, teaching legal analysis and writing. The family has enjoyed living in Michigan and being connected to the Haitian Network Group. They will continue to support HNGD and, as life and Baby Adele permit, attend major events.

We thank you all for your support and friendship. We would not have made it through the Michigan winters without you.

Merci!

Henry, Andrele, Alex, and Adele ■



WHERE ARE THEY NOW

By Réjane Pierre Tyler

Just having moved back to Michigan to get married, Réjane Pierre has now made the move back to the Windy City due to her husband's being transferred to a Chicago location for work. Réjane and Austin Tyler were married in October of 2020 at Old St. Mary's Catholic church in Greektown, downtown Detroit. They were thrilled to be so close to family for a while, and Réjane made sure her Texas native husband got to see as much of downtown Detroit and metro Detroit as possible since there are so many things to see! Austin was also

Continued on next page

able to get to know local members of the Haitian community and learn a lot about the Haitian culture, his favorite being the delicious food (he loves his mother-in-law Jacqueline's cooking!). In return, he shared what he knew of his Chickasaw, Cherokee, and Hispanic heritage. As much as Réjane and Austin miss the beautiful state of Michigan, they have settled into the South Loop neighborhood of Chicago quite nicely and are enjoying not having to drive anywhere (haha). Réjane is lucky enough to have kept her remote position in consulting, and for those who know her, it is usually hard to keep track of where she has moved to next! Now she is happy and learning that putting down roots doesn't mean you have to stop exploring other places. ■



Réjane and Austin in Hart Plaza, Detroit



Ralph (Réjane's brother), Austin, and Réjane up north in Hart, Michigan

CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY LEADERS MEET WITH CONGRESSWOMEN

Congresswomen Lawrence and Talib met with African and Caribbean Community Leaders at Kola Lounge. Despite a lack of sleep from a late night on Capitol Hill, Congresswomen Brenda Lawrence, and Rashida Tlaib (D-Mi) met with local African and Caribbean Community leaders on November 19, 2021. Both women had a late night in anticipation of the vote on the Build Back Better Act and voted for passage of the bill earlier in the day.

The Caribbean Community Service Center (CCSC) Haitian Network Group of Detroit (HNGD) and the African Bureau of Immigration and Social Affairs (ABISA) hosted the event at Kola Lounge in Farmington Hills Michigan. Issues raised to the Congresswomen ranged from the personal, like the inability of an individual to obtain a driver's license, to systemic policy issues. Problems with the immigration situation including discriminatory rules, an unresponsive bureaucracy, and the relative indifference of US foreign policy to African and Caribbean nations were mentioned as significant concerns.

"One of the things that we have to do is make sure that the visa system is fair" said Akindele Akinyemi, President and CEO of the Global African Business Association. Kevin Forbes from the African Caribbean Chamber of Congress, (ACCC) noted the frustration caused by the lack of people of color within the immigration system. "I never see anybody who looks like me," said Forbes.

All of the participants mentioned that they were glad to have the opportunity to be heard by the Congresswomen. "What you're saying is very real," said Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib. Both Congresswomen collected contact information and promised to stay in touch with the participants in order to follow up on the collective and personal issues raised. ■





IMMIGRANTS FROM THE CARIBBEAN IN MICHIGAN SINCE THE 1800S

*Written by Sophia L Chue
May 12, 2021*

First families found lodgings in the established black neighborhood of the Lower East Side, known as Black Bottom.

Our community members have been woven into the fabric of Detroit since our arrival. In 1925, 13 leaders of the black community founded Detroit Memorial Park in response to segregation at local cemeteries. The Board of Directors comprised of three founding members: Joseph Gomez of Trinidad, James M. Gregory, Esq. of Jamaica, dentist turned practicing lawyer, and Vollington Bristol of Barbados, who owned a funeral parlor on Joseph Campau and Macomb.

Let's talk about the organization recognized as the first on the block to meet the cultural and family needs of the Caribbean Diaspora here in Metro Detroit, The West Indian American Association. West Indian immigrants came to Detroit in a comparatively small but continual stream during the interwar years (between World War I and II). By 1930, immigrants from the Caribbean had settled in Michigan, and comprised roughly 1.9% of the African-American population. Stricken with loneliness and homesickness, Caribbean nationals turned to listening and dancing to the serenading sounds of calypso and heart thumping reggae music while playing cricket and soccer. They also indulged in comforting, sumptuous array of spicy dishes of their homeland to preserve ethnic identity. This led to the formation of an organization in the Detroit Metropolitan area in the 1920s called variously the West Indian Social League, the Michigan Cricket Club, and currently, the West Indian American Association (WIAA). The WIAA was reorganized in 1969 and formed its headquarters in the heart of the city of Detroit on 2015 East Seven Mile Road.

The heart of the Rust Belt is host to a variety of community organizations and programming that welcomes and provides a feeling of home in a foreign land. Such organizations are the Caribbean Community Service Center (CCSC), Caribbean Cultural & Carival Organization (CCCO), The Belizean Association of Michigan (BAM), Haitian Network Group of Detroit (HNGD), and Jamaican Association of Michigan (JAM) along with many others across the state.

Along with vibrant heritage and culture, Metro Detroit has a plethora of Caribbean restaurants to tease and satisfy taste buds of Caribbean flavored foods such as the Norma G's, Jamaican Pot, Caribbean Citchen, Island Spice and Irie Occasions/Flavors of Jamaica just to mention a few.

Many prominent and notable Caribbean nationals of Michigan operate in many professional roles serving our collective communities; some great examples are CEO of Detroit Medical Center (DMC), Dr. Audrey Gregory Ph.D., RN (Jamaica), State Senator Erika Geiss (Panama), Radiation Oncologist Henry Ford Health Systems Dr. Eleanor Walker MD (Grenada), Director Center for Latino/a and Latin American Studies Dr. Jorge Chinea, Ph.D. (Puerto Rico), and Associate Professor of English, Afro-American and African Studies University of Michigan Dr. Aliyah Khan, Ph.D. (Guyana)

along with many others.

We strive to keep our Caribbean culture alive as we thrive in Michigan. We invite you to learn about the vast diversity in our region of the world and celebrate National Caribbean American Heritage Month every June. For current and future events and additional information please visit us at:

<https://caribbeancommunitysc.org>

<https://facebook.com/CaribbeanCommunityServiceCenter>

<https://instagram.com/caribbeancommunitysc/>

Dr. Beard, Kathryn Lorraine, "Higher than those of their race of less fortunate advantages: Race, ethnicity, and West Indian political leadership in Detroit's African American community, 1885-1940" (2011). Wayne State University Dissertations. Pg 269. ■



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THE DUSABLE AUGUST COMMEMORATION – CHICAGO

On Saturday, August 21, 2021, DuSable Heritage Association (DHA) joined fellow members of the DuSable Park Coalition to commemorate the 203rd anniversary of the passing of the Haitian-born founder of the City of Chicago, Jean-Baptiste Pointe DuSable.

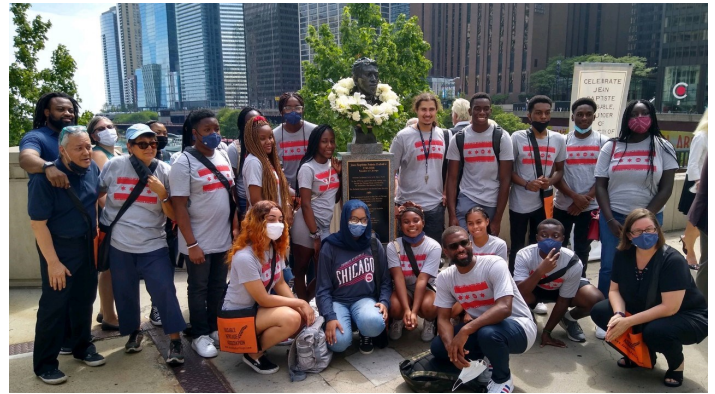
The festivities commenced around 11:00 AM CST at Pioneer Court on Michigan Avenue, next to the DuSable statue. Dr. Serge Pierre-Louis, DuSable Park Coalition chairman and DuSable Heritage Association's immediate past-president, emceed the 45-minute-long **Wreath-Laying Ceremony**. Numerous public officials, civic organization leaders, and distinguished guests were present, including Marc-Yves Saint-Victor, consul-general of Haiti in Chicago; Alderman Brian Hopkins from the Chicago City Council, the keynote speaker; Andrew Johnson, president of Indian Chamber of Commerce, who performed the Land Recognition and Blessing ritual; Dr. Donald Lassere, president & CEO of Chicago History Museum; Margaret Corkery, president of Haitian Network Group of Detroit (HNGD). Also in attendance was a delegation of faculty and students from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) headed by Professor Jeremiah Abiade, executive director of the DuSable Scholars Program—a STEM full-scholarship program, which UIC and DHA have partnered on. Other members of the academic universe included Professor Desmond Odugu of Lake Forest College as well as faculty and students from Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT). The ceremony made the evening news on ABC News Chicago.

A Tour of DuSable Founders Trail followed. The tour consisted of a mile-long walk via the Riverwalk Promenade during which Chicago's history from the pre-DuSable era to its beginnings as a city was recounted. It was coordinated by a team composed of DHA President Etzer Cantave, Lake Forest College History Professor Courtney P. Joseph, Dr. Pierre-Louis assisted by DHA Board Member Catherine A. Dauphin, Potawatomi educator Starla Thompson, and Floating Museum Co-Founder and Director Faheem Majeed. The tour also afforded us the opportunity to educate about DuSable's Haitian roots, his legacy of entrepreneurship and multiculturalism, and update on the status of the long-overdue DuSable Park—the ultimate symbol of recognition for DuSable and his Potawatomi wife Kittihawa. The Tour ended around 1:30 PM right across from the site of the future DuSable Park with a presentation by Mr. Majeed of his Inflatable Sculpture named "Founders"—a tribute to DuSable, Kittihawa, and Chicago's first Black Mayor Harold Washington.

The commemoration continued with a 5:00 PM virtual screening of "Kafé Negro," a film depicting the historical and cultural bond between Haitians and Cubans through coffee and migrations. The screening was a DHA and African Diaspora International Film Festival (ADIFF) collaboration. Later in the evening, DuSable Harbor came alive around the Founders Inflatable Sculpture with a colorful display of the Potawatomi culture by Starla Thompson, replete with music and dance.

It was a pleasure for the Chicago Board to welcome the HNGD delegation, led by its dynamic president, our dear friend Maggy. She brought along to DHA the friendship of Ms. Carmelite Dalmacy, who felt such a sense of urgency toward the realization of DuSable Park that she took the extraordinary step to immediately set a fundraising goal to supplement our efforts. Heartfelt Thanks, Maggy and Carmelite! Godspeed, HNGD!

The DHA Board ■



JEAN-BAPTISTE POINTE DUSABLE: CHICAGO PIONEER

By Réjane Pierre Tyler

Recently, there has been more exposure regarding Jean-Baptiste Pointe DuSable, the first non-native settler and founder of Chicago, and more and more people are learning about him. This past August, several of my family members and I attended the DuSable Commemoration in downtown Chicago, put on by the DuSable Heritage Association, DuSable Park Coalition, and Friends of

the Park. The program included a wreath-laying ceremony that also included the Native American Chamber of Commerce of Illinois and a tour of the Founder's Trail, and was truly a wonderful, enlightening experience. Included in our group were my cousins visiting from Michigan, and after the ceremony and tour, I wanted to know what they thought and how they felt. So I came up with some questions for discussion and asked their thoughts while also providing my own.

Q: Of all the things you learned about DuSable and his life



during the ceremony and tour, did any of them surprise you? If so, which ones and why?

Gabrielle: I learned that he was entrepreneur who started from scratch with help from Native Americans all around him. The part that shocked me the most was that he literally came from Haiti to a completely different country and founded a city.

Gaelle: I hadn't known before the tour that he had come to the US after washing up on the Louisiana shore after a shipwreck. I also didn't know about his close relationship to the local indigenous tribes of Chicago. His close relationship to the local tribes surprised me because a lot of the time when we hear about explorers' interactions with native people, they're violent but DuSable maintained a good relationship with them.

Me: That he was able to live in peace with people from other cultures so easily that he married into the Potawatomi culture, and they clearly trusted him and saw him as a good person. That he was able to speak so many languages that helped drive his trading business via communicating with a wide range of customers.

Q: What was your favorite part of the day?

Gabrielle: My favorite part of the ceremony was the DuSable statue and the speech provided by the Native Americans because it made me feel so proud of who I am and how resilient we people of color (POC) are! It also reminded of the relationship between the African slaves and the Taino people of Haiti.

Gaelle: I liked getting to see the bust that was built in honor of DuSable because it was just really beautiful, and the bronze color was really nice.

Me: Seeing so many people from all cultures and beliefs take the time to be part of the ceremony and to learn. The Native American blessing led by Andrew Johnson of the Native American Chamber of Commerce of Illinois was inspiring, celebrating not only the union of a Haitian man and American Indian woman in an age where that may not have been the norm, but also honoring all their contributions that helped make Chicago what it has become. They would probably be described as a "power couple" in the present day.

Q: How did hearing about DuSable make you feel regarding your heritage?

Gabrielle: Hearing about his story made me feel seen and heard because I knew we Haitians have done tons of things for numerous countries, but actually seeing it face to face was like "finally, here's one of the many examples and proof!"

Gaelle: As a Haitian-American person, hearing about DuSable made me feel even more proud of my history and where I come from, especially with everything going on with the migrant crisis. I think it's important to know that Haitian people

helped build this country.

Me: Even prouder than normal! Haha, but seriously, it was a mix of pride, unexpected but pleasant surprise, and extremely deep respect.

Q: We know that there is not much information on DuSable's life before the 1770s - what parts would you love to have known about the missing parts of his life?

Gabrielle: I would love to have known what his life was like in Haiti and if he was still connected to his heritage when he was in America. Gaelle also asked a great question that I found interesting, which was "how did he react to the Haitian revolution?" and "was he there?"

Gaelle: I would have loved to know more about DuSable's early life in Haiti since there isn't much information on that part of his life.

Me: I would love to know about his childhood – what was he like as a child? How was he with his parents? At what point in his life did he envision his goals and set about accomplishing them? Was there something or someone that acted as a catalyst for such ambitious endeavors?

Q: What lessons did you take away from the ceremony and tour?

Gabrielle: I learned that POC unity was and is very important in a world dominated by white supremacy.

Gaelle: A lesson I took with me after this tour was to always look for the small and big ways POC and other marginalized people contributed to American history. They mentioned that for a very long time the founding of Chicago was attributed to early French explorers when in actuality, it was founded by a black immigrant and native woman and now I think about how many marginalized people don't get credited for their contributions.

Me: That mutual respect and courtesy can go a long way in coexisting with others, no matter what the background. DuSable was able to do it and make it look easy! We could all learn a thing or two from his actions.

Q: If you could say something to DuSable yourself, what would it be?

Gabrielle: I would ask him about Haiti, specifically what inspired him and was it our culture/country?

Gaelle: I would love to ask him about his reaction to the Haitian revolution since he left Haiti before it occurred and was once an enslaved person himself.

Me: Thank you. Thank you for your ambition, your risk taking, and your perseverance – thank you for inspiring us. ■



HNGD

HAITIAN NETWORK GROUP
OF DETROIT PRESENTS

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SUN JULY 31, 2022 12PM -10PM

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Storytelling

LOCATION

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