

AFRICAN HERITAGE STUDIES ASSOCIATION



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## **JULY 2019 NEWSLETTER**

### **HISTORICAL MILESTONES - BY FOUNDER SHELBY LEWIS**

During the 1968 Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association (ASA) in Los Angeles, the Black Africanist Caucus demanded an end to ASA's marginalization of people of color. ASA leaders agreed to address Caucus demands before the next annual conference. However, at the 1969 ASA Conference in Montreal, Caucus members concluded that ASA's leader were disingenuous about addressing their demands and decided to occupy the major plenary session and denounce ASA's racial policies and practices. The Caucus also decided that it was time to create an association that provides an international forum for sharing and discussing African-centered research and views on African history and culture.

In December 1969 members of the Caucus convened at what is now the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) and incorporated the African Heritage Studies Association (AHTA). John Henrik Clarke was the Founding President and Chair of the Founding Board that included Nicholas Onyawu, Leonard Jeffries, Shelby Lewis (Smith) and Melina Kagobe. The Board concluded that convening annual conferences was the best way to explore and expand its membership and knowledge base. Thousands of enthusiastic supporters and notable scholars attended well-organized conferences at Howard University (1970), Southern University (1971), and New York City (1972).

In 1973/4 AHTA fielded a delegation to the International Meeting on African Studies in Addis Ababa and requested certification. ASA had served as the sole representative of African Studies in America for decades, but since only one US delegation could be certified, a compromise between the two associations was required. John Henrik Clarke, AHTA's President, was selected as leader of a joint US delegation. This was a watershed moment for AHTA, one that was enhanced by a private audience with Emperor Haile Selassie.

In 1975 AHTA organized a pilgrimage to Ghana and in the succeeding decades AHTA members challenged conventional views of Africa; interrogated ahistorical ideas of an underdeveloped, dependent, resource poor continent in perpetual need of western aid and tutelage; collaborated with other disciplinary associations, including holding joint conferences with the National Conference of Black Political Scientists and the Black Studies Association; and mentored young scholars studying African history and culture. These efforts ignited a proliferation of African-centered research and publications, the expansion of Black Studies, African Studies and African Woman's Studies programs, and the development of curriculum materials on African history and culture for pre-collegiate school systems.

Around the turn of the 21st Century, AHTA's momentum decelerated, leading to a Renewal Period that began in 2013. Leaders of the Renewal Period assessed AHTA's accomplishments; examined best practices; established an AHTA Institute that published *The Legacy of John Henrik Clarke*, the first book in its Legacy Series; and launched a Five Year Conferences Series (2014-2019) for the stated purpose of "igniting a renaissance in scholarship, policies and development in the African world." Since the Renewal began, successful conferences have been convened in Atlanta, New York, Washington, DC, Long Beach, and twice in Atlanta.

Currently, the newly elected AHTA Leadership Team is planning the Association's Golden Anniversary Celebration (2019), which includes an Egyptian Tour and the 50th Annual AHTA Conference in Washington DC. In addition to panels and plenary sessions, the Conference will include tours of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, a special Mural and Photo Exhibition on African history and African peoples from around the globe, an AHTA Founder's Luncheon, and other special features that enrich the celebration. The expectation is that the Golden Anniversary Celebration will set the tone for the next 50 years of documenting and explicating the global context in which slavery, colonialism and imperialism emerged, converged, pillaged the African world and interrupted its development, and examining the impact of historical forces that still resonate and continue to divide, destabilize, exploit and shape relations within and between African peoples and the rest of the world.

# “REPARATIONS 2020”

AHSA President, Ife Williams

To date, there have been five Presidential hopefuls who have semi-endorsed reparations for African Americans: Kamala Harris, Marianne Williamson, Julian Castro, Elizabeth Warren and Corey Booker. The only candidate to offer a dollar amount has been Marianne Williamson and Corey Booker has offered a “baby bond” that would create a trust fund for all infants where money would be added by the government based on their income level and can only be withdrawn to purchase a home or to get an education. The group #ADOS-African Descendants of Slavery have publicly taken credit for bullying the candidates into taking a stand on Reparations and Corey Booker has been advised by one of their intellectual contributors, William Darity of Duke University!

#ADOS is headed by Yvette Carnell and Antonio Moore, both of whom have YouTube channels. It sounds like an unlikely partnership between Blacks and Russians, but if we look beneath the surface it becomes clear that their true purposes are both to “undermine” (a term they like to use) the Reparations movement and to suppress the Black vote in the 2020 elections. How? Let’s look back to the 2016 elections.

According to research conducted by Clarence Lusane of Howard University and Reva Hines, a number of fake sites were created by the Russian troll factory called Internet Research Agency to micro-target individuals who have been identified by certain hits they used such as Black History, and then they were sent false information about the candidates and the upcoming elections through Tweeter, Face Book and YouTube (U.S. v. Internet Research Agency). Some of the more blatant messages were “don’t vote at all,” “Vote for Stein” and “You can vote on your Tweeter account.” Among other studies, this information comes from the U.S. Congress in their report on Russian interference in the 2016 election and through Donna Brazile who studied Russian intervention in her book Hacks: The Inside Story of the Break-ins and Breakdowns That Put Donald Trump in the White House. These nefarious activities can be spuriously credited for the low turnout of Black voters in that election (in the understanding of those more familiar with actual Black voters, the low turnout was because of Hillary Clinton being the Party’s candidate).

In the Black progressive community, it is believed that #ADOS is an integral part of this novel conspiracy to suppress the Black vote because they have begun sending out messages similar to those of 2016, this time telling their followers to vote only for a candidate who supports Reparations; if they don’t, then don’t vote at all! Clearly the goal here is to get Trump re-elected by getting a major Democratic voting bloc to stay home on election-day. Furthermore, the group has declared that “Pan-Africanism is dead” and that the only Black people in America who should receive reparations are those born here denying the claim to Africans and those from the Caribbean. This is a diabolical and dangerous position given that our strength lies in Pan-Africanist union and it is part of Russian foreign policy to disrupt all regional alliances from the civic to international levels and it is also very divisive to the unity of our community. The basic analysis of #ADOS derived from data analyzed by William Darity is correct, there is a widened and still widening economic gap between Blacks and whites in this country, for every \$1.00 held by a white American only 10 cents is held by Blacks; however, to convolute the socio-economic status of Blacks within an anti-immigrant stance is counter-productive. The present trajectory of US economic policies assures that this trend will continue and worsen. The movement for Reparations in this country can be traced back to 1780 when Elizabeth Freeman aka Mum Bett, made her successful claim for compensation and has been waged by groups such as N’COBRA (National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America), D-12, The Black Panther Party, Black Lives Matter and now #40 and NAARC (National African American Reparations Commission), among others. The call has been waged globally, beginning with the Pan African Conferences first called by W.E.B. DuBois, the Abuja Declaration of African governments, and the World Conference against Racism (WCAR), where all the governments were confronted with the issue of compensation and the Caribbean countries’ CARICOM pressure on their former colonizers for reparative justice. The Reparations movement is genuine and we can’t allow it to be minimized and sidetracked nor can we be further disfranchised by the destructive efforts of our enemies within!

# PRELIMINARY CONFERENCE SCHEDULE FOR AHSA 50TH CONFERENCE THURGOOD MARSHALL CENTER 1816 12TH ST. NW WASHINGTON, DC 20009

## **THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31ST -**

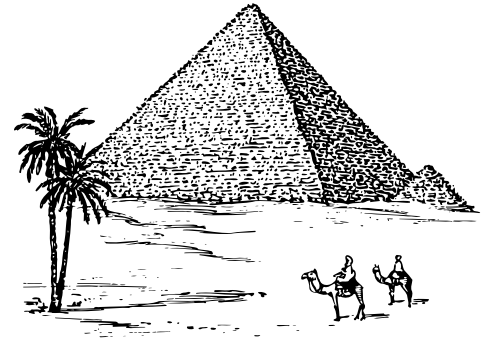
### **A WALK THROUGH OUR HISTORY**

KEMET ON THE POTOMAC

LUNCH STOP ON OWN

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MUSEUM



## **FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1ST**

OPENING CEREMONY AND PLENARY-"50 YEARS OF AHSA"

PAPER PRESENTATIONS, WORKSHOPS AND FILMS

EVENING PROGRAM-CEREMONY HONORING FOUNDERS AND BOARD

MEMBERS OPENING CEREMONY AND PLENARY-"50 YEARS OF AHSA"

PAPER PRESENTATIONS, WORKSHOPS AND FILMS

EVENING PROGRAM-CEREMONY HONORING FOUNDERS AND BOARD

MEMBERS

## **SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2ND**

**9:00-10:45** OPENING LIBATIONS AND MORNING SESSION I

**11:00-12:45** LOOKING AHEAD: NEXT FIFTY YEARS OF AHSA

**1:00** CLOSING AND VOTE OF THANKS!

Cambria Hotel Washington DC Convention Center

899 O Street Washington, DC 20001 (202) 299-1188

Code: **AHSA DC 2019 Conference group**

Rate: 169.00 **CUT-OFF DATE** 09/26/2019

# GREETINGS FROM VICE PRESIDENT AFIA ZAKIYA!

In our last newsletter I proposed two goals for AHSA to engage in scholarship on and activism in Afrika. The scholarship angle dealt with our discipline of Africana Studies and called for some research and thinking on how to bring ecological and environmental issues to the forefront of our cultural, social, political and historical analysis of contemporary global Afrikan problems. I proposed we use a multidisciplinary Afrikan centered environmental and political ecology framework-an Afri-eco-philosophy. Such an approach looks for indigenous Afrikan life organizing concepts, like Ubuntu/Ukama, Maat, and Omenala, with embedded eco-philosophies useful for assessing problems of African people. I argued this thinking needs to be part of AHSA's central discipline of focus - Africana Studies. The second proposal was to organize something practical to do, like a water project in Ghana. This would allow us to put our emerging Afrikan centered eco-philosophy and framework into practice, and ground with our indigenous brothers' and sisters' struggles for sovereign control and access to their land and water. We could also expand our organizational reach, especially encouraging our youth members (age-grade 18-34) in particular, to go to Afrika and co-create a new half-century and beyond of relationships, scholarship and praxis in Pan Afrikan partnerships that moves us towards global Afrikan sovereignty in all its complexity.

This second discussion continues to set the scene for shaping how our new discourse can document indigenous Afrikan people's eco-philosophies in general and those that guided water governance and human-nature relationships in Ghana prior to the contemporary crisis that exists due to global western imperialism. So, what is the crisis our water sovereignty project in Ghana will materially address? Can we look at the broader social and historical dynamics of that country and compare to the material situation on the ground with selected Black communities in America? My future discussion will outline the situation of water and sanitation provision, accent on Ghana, using an Afrikan centered eco-philosophy, political ecology and indigenous methodological approach. In the meantime, as we think of communities to engage in equal partnerships for community-led endogenous development, it is important that we keep our actions in perspective. To do so I argue that first a definition and look at the concept of Afrikan philanthropy is necessary to guide AHSA's plan to support access to water, as part of a larger engagement plan with a chosen Ghanaian community. While no community has been selected yet, or has agreed to allow us into their space, the idea of philanthropy amongst the pre-colonial Asante people is offered as an example of how we can think of moving our desired relationship forward. Because many of us may think we are doing a project to 'help' a resource poor Ghanaian community and intentionally or unintentionally see our partnership from a western lens as 'philanthropy' - it's important that we see how such a concept, if it existed at all, was once perceived. In the next edition of AHSA's newsletter, I offer the Asante concept of philanthropy for ideological clarity and practical guidance since we planning to engage the country of Ghana in our exciting plans to reimagine AHSA's connection with Afrika.

"Water is the place from which all beauty and blessings flow... We are engendered by water, nurtured by water - water is mystical space because it is the medium of love and life before life." Sande people, Sierra Leone.



Ife Wms. & Afia Zakiya at  
NCOBPS 50th Anniversary Conference

# PLEASE VOLUNTEER TO SERVE ON ONE OF AFRICAN HERITAGE STUDIES ASSOCIATION STANDING COMMITTEES!!!



1. **Program Planning Committee to achieve-** shall have primary responsibility for defining and organizing activities of the Association. It may appoint sub-committees with the approval of the President.
2. **Liaison committee** - shall maintain contact with those organizations of interest to the Association and keep AHSA informed of their activities.
3. **Financial Committee** – shall be responsible for raising funds for the organization, planning its annual budget and disbursing its funds.
4. **Communications and Membership Committee** - shall assist the secretaries in maintaining contact with the membership of AHSA. They shall have primary responsibility for building AHSA membership and collecting dues.
5. **Research and Educational Exchanges** - shall devise research proposals for funding, keep informed on research carried on by members and work with Black and African Studies programs to improve curricula and provide information in bibliographic materials. In addition, they shall assist the Board in coordinating educational exchange programs.
6. **Information Committee on African and African American Relations** - will research and disseminate to the membership, information on all aspects of American relations with Africa and vice versa.

Please forward your preference and contact information to  
[africanheritagestudies@gmail.com](mailto:africanheritagestudies@gmail.com)

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# Call for papers!!!!

## **AFRICAN HERITAGE STUDIES ASSOCIATION NATIONAL CONFERENCE OCTOBER 31ST –NOVEMBER 2, 2019 WASHINGTON, DC THEME: “CELEBRATING AHSA’S GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY- TOWARDS AN AFRICAN RENAISSANCE: AFRICA AND DIASPORA COLLABORATIONS”**

The African Heritage Studies Association (AHSA), celebrates 50 historic years of existence in 2019. AHSA was founded in 1968 as a result of a rupture within the African Studies Association that persisted in marginalizing Black voices regarding the scholarship of African people. At our national conference in Washington DC, we will take time to reflect on the past five decades of service to the global Black world, take stock of lessons learned, and plan for bold ways to ignite an African Renaissance of scholarship and service to advance AHSA founding member’s promise of moving the Global African World forward towards liberation and sovereignty. Controlling the narrative of our experiences remains a core aspect of what this Renaissance must look like.

The year 2019 is significant for other reasons that intersect with the mission of AHSA. The President and people of Ghana have declared 2019 as a Year of Return, in commemoration of the 400 years since the tragic ‘Maafa’ and warfare against Afrikan peoples (aka the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade”) began. We are also mid-point in the UN Decade for People of African Descent 2015-2024. Finally, US H.R.1242 – the 400 Years of African-American History Commission Act, creates a body “to develop and carry out activities throughout the United States to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the arrival of Africans in the English colonies at Point Comfort, Virginia, in 1619.” The time to deepen existing African-centered paradigms and Pan African activism is upon us. AHSA is focused on strengthening existing progressive relationships and forming new collaborations throughout the African world to document, share and use our cultural legacy to advance our race. We are particularly interested in hearing from global African youth on how they believe a sovereign African world can be achieved.



# CFP GUIDELINES:

AHSA invites abstract proposals for individual papers, panels, performances, films, round-tables, workshops, or other sharing formats from interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary perspectives focused on the 2019 theme “Towards an African Renaissance: Africa and Diaspora Collaborations”.

Abstracts of 500 words maximum must be submitted, by 15 July, 2019.

Full Papers must be submitted by 30 July 2019.

Notification of acceptance will be sent by August 16, 2019

AHSA’s conference committee will consider proposals reflecting research on all aspects of the history, culture, politics and social life of Africans throughout the globe that contributes to a forward looking agenda for the study, teaching and advancement of Black world history and that strengthens Pan African collaborations towards African sovereignty. Panel and roundtable proposals must include the panel/roundtable title and 200-word abstract summarizing the theme of the panel, and include the name and paper titles for each panelist (including the chair and commentator).

## THE FOLLOWING ARE SUGGESTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATION TOPICS:

- The State of Africana Studies: Reflections on five decades of Scholarship and Future Trends
- African Enslavement, Forced Migration and the creation of the African Diaspora
- Women in Africa and the African Diaspora
- Neocolonialism, Globalization and Neoliberalism in Africa: Analysis and Impact on African life and Sovereignty
- Africana Religions and Spirituality
- African centered Political Ecology, Eco-philosophies and Africana Studies
- Globalization and militarization in Africa and the Diaspora
- Black Power and Black Wealth
- The UN Decade for People of African Descent and the Struggle for Reparations
- Political representation and democratic governance Across the African Diaspora
- Education for Nation-building: The contributions of African-centered education to African Liberation
- Pan Africanism, the new African Renaissance, and collaborations for African liberation
- African Art, Film and Music – Images and words capturing contemporary collective resistance and struggles against Black oppression

Send abstracts and other required information ATTN: Dr. Afia S. Zakiya

here: [africanheritagestudies@gmail.com](mailto:africanheritagestudies@gmail.com) For more information, and to register for the 2019 conference visit the AHSA home page: <https://www.africanheritagestudiesassociation.org>