

AKOMA's 2006 Church Roll

Aeon Baptist Church

Pastor: James L. Cherry
Debra E. W. Bell

Baber AME Church

Pastor: Rev. Marlowe V. N. Washington
Robin Franklin

Bethel Christian Fellowship

Pastor: Rev. Ron A. Domina
Georgia Ann Prescott

Breath of Life SDA

Pastor: Pastor Cornelius Wesley
Deseree Bliss
Evelyn Greenwade Boltwood
Carolyn Butts
Roxanne Wright

Bridge Builders Ministry

Pastors: Phil & Ruby Harlow
Phyllis Griffin

Church of Love Faith Center

Pastor: Bishop Gregory L. Parris
Dr. Arlette Miller Smith

Charity Bible Baptist Church

Pastor: Anthony Saxton
C. Sherie Hill

First Church of God

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Dwight Fowler
Myrtle Day
Regina Fowler

Full Gospel Tabernacle

Pastor: Rev. Ira White
Clara Warfield

Immaculate Conception

Pastor: Father Paul Gitau
Musette Castle
Rose Stokes
Mary Wingo

Jefferson Ave. SDA

Pastor: Brian Carter
Dorothy Wilson

Living Word Full Gospel Church

Pastor: Rev. Nathan McGill, Sr.
Willie-Louise McBride

Memorial AME Zion

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Kenneth Q. James
Eunice White

Mt. Vernon Baptist

Pastor: Dr. Harmon E. Stockdale
Cheryl Holloway
Rita Mitchell
Karen Summers

New Bethel CME

Pastor: Rev. Weldon G. Thomas
Julia Lawson
Anita Simpson
Gloria Wilson

Second Baptist - Mumford

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Charles A. Thurman
Nerlande Anselme
Marilyn Johnson
Marguerite Lucas
Catherine Parker
Shelley Lucas-Rice
Brenda Robinson
Arlene Williams

Simple Truth Ministries

Pastor: Pastor Rev. Terry Holley
Maggie Moore-Holley

St. Luke/St. Simon's Cyrene

Pastor: Rev. Michael Hopkins
Ruth Anderson

St. Paul Holiness

Pastor: Rev. Abraham Parker
Kristy Jackson

The Father's House

Pastor: Pierre du Plessis
Kathy Damann

AKOMA

The African American Women's Gospel Choir

eleventh Annual Scholarship Concert

“From Struggle to Strength: Sacred Songs of the Sisterhood”

2 Corinthians 12:10



Saturday – June 10, 2006 – 6:30 PM

Mt. Vernon Baptist Church
351 Joseph Avenue – Rochester, New York

AKOMA's Support Team/Acknowledgements

Officers

Executive Director/Founder - Dr. Arlette Miller Smith
 Executive Music Director - Karen Summers
 Assistant Music Director - C. Sherie Hill
 President - Nancy Walters
 Vice President - Debra Bell
 Secretary - Ruth Anderson
 Treasurer - Gloria Wilson
 Chaplain - Phyllis Griffin
 Parliamentarian - Georgia Prescott
 Herstorian - Eunice White

Conductors

- Cheryl Holloway
 - C. Sherie Hill

Ushers

Inactive AKOMA Members

Offering: Men of AKOMA

Abe Butts
 Lonnie Day
 Oscar Holloway
 Danny Walters



Technical Support

Julia Lawson
 Anita Simpson

Photography/Video

Benjamin Pinkston

Layout & Design

Art Smith

Cover Design

Marj Crum

Public Relations

Joanne Gordon

Editors

Ramona Moore
 Dr. Arlette Miller Smith

AKOMA's Music Team

Karen Summers

Karen Summers is a retired educator. She taught in the Rochester City School District for 31 years. Karen is currently The Director of Music at Mt. Vernon Baptist Church. She enjoys reading, traveling and collecting bells and dolls. Karen is the Executive Music Director for AKOMA.



Cheryl Holloway

Cheryl Holloway is currently employed by the City School District as Chief of School Development and Operations. She is married to Oscar Holloway and is the mother of one son, Philip. She attends Mt. Vernon Baptist Church where she is the director of several choirs. Her interests include reading, sewing and movies. Mrs. Holloway is an original member of AKOMA and currently serves as the conductor.



C. Sherie Hill

C. Sherie Hill earned her Masters in Music Education from Brockport. She is currently the musician at Charity Bible Baptist Church. She is also employed by the City School District and teaches at Frederick Douglass and Schools 8 and 36.

Photo
 Unavailable

Ministry through Music: An AKOMA Chronology

1996	<i>Come Let Us Sing</i>	Psalms 28:7
1997	<i>I Have Hope</i>	Hosea 2:15
1998	<i>Perpetual Praise</i>	Psalms 34:1
1999	<i>Better Than Blessed</i>	Psalms 34:8-10
2000	<i>We Give You Praise</i>	Psalms 63:3-4
2001	<i>More Than Enough</i>	Isaiah 12:2
2002	<i>Constant Blessings</i>	Ephesians 1:3
2003	<i>With My Whole Heart</i>	Psalms 138:1
2004	<i>Let Everything That Hath Breath Praise The Lord</i>	Psalms 150
2005	<i>...And With My Song Will I Praise Him</i>	Psalm 28:7
2006	<i>From Struggle to Strength: Sacred Songs of the Sisterhood</i>	2 Corinthians 12:10



*If you plan for a year, sow a seed;
 If you plan for a decade, plant a tree;
 If you plan for a century, educate the people.*
 — Dr. Addie Mitchell

Nona Patterson Chambers Scholarship

The Nona Patterson Chambers Scholarship was named in honor of our **AKOMA** mother, Nona Patterson Chambers. Mother Nona is our eldest and most beloved member. She has served as an example of what it really means to be a dedicated and humble Christian mother. Mother Nona is a faithful member whose quiet manner and beautiful smile make it very fitting that this scholarship be named in her honor. **AKOMA** member Esther Pinkston is Mother Nona's daughter.

"From Struggle to Strength: Sacred Songs of the Sisterhood" Supporters

2 Corinthians 12:10

(Continued from page 6)

Brenda Joseph
 Linda Joseph
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 JJM Holdings L L C - Ernest Myers
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 Terri Wilson

SPONSORS \$5.00

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 Wallace McFadden
 Alvin Peterson
 Johnnie Powell
 Mr. & Mrs. James Walters
 (In Loving Memory of Rosetta Payne Belmont)

2006 Scholarship Recipients



Porsha Coaxum

School of the Arts (SOTA) Singer, Student Ensemble and the Senior Drama Showcase. *Music Theatre will be her major at Genessee Community college. Porsha is an active member of New Life Fellowship's youth department and its youth choir.*



Katrina Griffith

School of the Arts Yearbook & Student Government Association. Veterinary Technology will be her major at Medialle College. Katrina serves as an usher, youth deaconess and Pathfinder leader at Breath of Life Seventh Day Adventist Church.



Alyshia Thomas

Churchville Chili Executive Council, Yearbook, Multicultural & Foreign Language Clubs and Varsity Basketball. Elementary & Special Education will be her major at Syracuse University. Alyshia is a member of the Willing Workers Committee at Ebenezer Baptist.

Special Thanks:

Rev. Dr. Harmon Stockdale, Sr. and the Mt. Vernon Family. Also thanks to all who supported our "Those Preaching Women" Program (April 30, 2006).

"From Struggle to Strength: Sacred Songs of the Sisterhood" Supporters

2 Corinthians 12:10

2005-2006 SCHOLARSHIP COMMISSION

Musette Castle - Chairperson

BENEFACTORS - \$50.00 & Up
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 Mary Gagliano
 Angie Gitek
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 Sarah Gordon
 Cindy Graney
 Dr. Ruth Harris
 Everlena Hunt
 Irene Ingram
 Josetta Jackson
 Nina Jackson
 Beatrice Johnson
 Donnye Johnson

(Continued on page 7)

**Ruth Anderson
 Rose Stokes**

Nancy Walters

**Marguerite Lucas
 W. Louise Walker-McBride**

2006 Scholarship Recipients

**Porsha Coaxm
 Katrina Griffith
 Alyshia Thomas**

2005 Scholarship Recipients

Ashley Brass Angelica Davis
 Tiffany Ellis

2004 Scholarship Recipients

Krystal Crawford
 Desiree Israel
 Leslie Pierre-Philippe

2003 Scholarship Recipients

Kierstyn Blair
 Kari McCree
 Lauryn Minter

2002 Scholarship Recipients

Kekeria Achola Bitek Porcia Nicole Hartzog
 Tiffany Nicole Jackson Tyra Victoria Kelly
 Starr Celeste Myers
 Nathalie Martin Pierre-Philippe
 Angela Yvonne Stockdale
 Yolanda Renee Uter

2001 Scholarship Recipients

Peta-Gae Andrade Shemeka Davis
 LaTia Dukes Takara Gray
 Aja Houston Brandi Howard
 Shakira Nelson Natasha Nichole Stevens
 Delora Nicole Turner Kirkshinta Turnipseed
 Uwem Udofa

2000 Scholarship Recipients

Tyanisha Brown Margaret Neal Enis
 Lindsey Green Deidre Hill
 Brandy Rosier Sherell Scott
 Leah Thompson Re'shawna Turner
 Naomi Woffard

1999 Scholarship Recipients

Johnique Ter'esa Billups
 Erica Michelle Bryant
 Kimberly Alecia Thurman
 Sonia Elizabeth Uter

1998 Scholarship Recipients

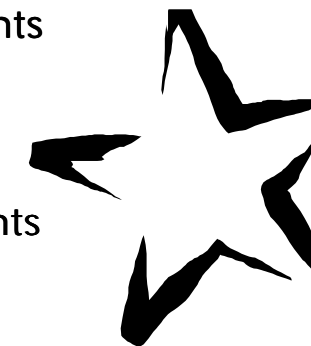
La-Toya Dukes
 Katrina Louise Jones
 Tamisha N. Smith
 Melody Terese Williams

1997 Scholarship Recipients

Tameka Avant Danielle Gaston
 Yuressa Hubbard Rashida Moore

1996 Scholarship Recipients

April N. Anderson Donnye Graham
 Shalewa Hardaway



AKOMA's Eleventh Annual Scholarship Concert Programme

"From Struggle to Strength: Sacred Songs of the Sisterhood"

2 Corinthians 12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: **for when I am weak, then am I strong.**

Saturday, June 10, 2006 - 6:30 pm
Mt. Vernon Baptist Church
Rochester, NY

- STRUGGLE ... STRENGTH PROGRAM ORDER -

American Chattel-Dancing, Singing, Speaking in a strange land inside the peculiar institution
Soulful Messiah (Sacred Dance) *-Quincy Jones*
Steal Away *Negro Spiritual*
"Runagate, Runagate" *Poem by Robert Hayden*
Ain't That Good News *Negro Spiritual*

Mother Load-The use/misuse of the African American woman as the mother figure to all
"Soliloquy from An Enslaved Mother" *Unknown Source*
Stand Still *-Carol Antrom*
"Still Here" *Poem by Langston Hughes*
I Still Have Joy *-Joe Pace*

Healing Power, Heavenly Word-The power of the Word over the plight of the so-called enslaved
Precious Lord *-Thomas Dorsey*
You Can Make It *Traditional*
I Came to Magnify the Lord *-Mark Condon*

Lifting Voices, Climbing Ladders—Suffrage, support, and assistance from colored club women
We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder *Negro Spiritual*
"We Women Black" *Poem by Opal Adisa*
Get Your House in Order *-Dottie Peoples*
Excerpts from "Sometimes as Women Only" *-Gloria Wade Gayles*
He Won't Let You Down *-Lamar Campbell*

Civil Disobedience—Black women and the modern Civil Rights Era
Ain't Gonna Let Nobody *Traditional*
"And the Women Gathered" *Poem by Gloria Wade Gayles*
We Shall Overcome *Traditional*

- NONA P. CHAMBERS SCHOLARSHIP PRESENTATION -

- SCHOLARSHIP DONATION -

- AKOMA: SACRED SONGS OF THE SISTERHOOD -

Introduction & "Room Full of Sisters" *Poem by Mona Lake Jones*
Soldiers *Traditional*
I Will Sing Praises *Richard Smallwood*
Why Did He Do It? *GMWA (Women of Worship)*

Benediction Rev. Dr. Harmon Stockdale, Sr.

CREDITS: From Struggle to Strength: Sacred Songs of the Sisterhood

AMERICAN CHATTEL

Dance Group: Immaculate Conception Liturgical Dancers
Karen Summers
"Steal Away": Soloist: Karen Summers
"Runagate" ("Run away") Readers: Musette Castle, Eunice White, Rita Mitchell, Clara Warfield, Maggie Moore Holley

"Good News"

MOTHERLOAD

"Enslaved Mother" Reader: Eunice White
"Stand Still" Soloist: Cheryl Holloway
"Still Here" Reader: Nancy Walters
"I Still Have Joy" Soloist: Maggie Moore Holley

HEALING POWER, HEAVENLY WORD

Praying Women Women: Gloria Wilson, Robin Franklin, Rose Stokes, Phyllis Griffin, Myrtle Day
"Precious Lord" Soloist: Gloria Wilson
"You Can Make It" Soloist: Georgia Prescott
"We's Free" Reader: Eunice White
"I Came to Magnify the Lord"

LIFTING VOICES, CLIMBING LADDERS

"We Are Climbing..." Soloist: Phyllis Griffin
"We Women Black" Reader: Musette Castle
"Get Your House in Order" Soloist: Maggie Moore Holley
"Sometimes..." Reader: Clara Warfield
"He Won't Let You Down" Soloist: Rose Stokes

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

Women with Protest Signs: Women: Roxanne Wright, Carolyn Butts, Marilyn Johnson,
"Aint Gonna Let" Soloist: Nancy Walters
"Women Gathered" Readers: Eunice White, Musette Castle, Clara Warfield, Rita Mitchell, Mitchell & White
"Moved" & "Woke Up" during poem
"We Shall Overcome"

SCHOLARSHIP PRESENTATION

Scholarship Commission

SCHOLARSHIP DONATION

Men of **AKOMA**

AKOMA: SACRED SONGS OF THE SISTERHOOD

Intro/"Room Full of Sisters"/"Soldiers" Dr. Arlette Miller Smith
Script Adaptation: Arlette Miller Smith with Ramona Moore
Executive Music Director: Karen Summers
Assistant Music Director: C. Sherie Hill
Conductors: Cheryl Holloway & C. Sherie Hill
Directors of Readers: Musette Castle & Arlette Miller Smith
Props & Staging: Myrtle Day & Kathy Damann
Sound Technician: Lonnie Kimble

AKOMA: A HERSTORJCAL CHRONOLOGY

AKOMA is Rochester's African American Women's Gospel Choir whose Akan name means patience, endurance, consistency and faithfulness. AKOMA's Andinkra symbol is the heart which indicates compassion, tenderness and charity.

After a debut performance in August of 1995 for Women fest- a day-long celebration of the 75th Anniversary of Women's Right to vote-the group of thirty-five women decided to embrace a musical ministry that encompassed both their collective faith and their love for gospel music. Under the direction of Janet Rugless-Poles, executive music director; Cheryl Holloway, conductor/soloist; and Arlette Miller Smith, founder/executive director, the group adopted the name AKOMA because it symbolizes their African heritage while highlighting their strong spiritual roots, along with their desire to serve the Rochester community. In fact, more than 17 Rochester area churches are represented on AKOMA's current roster of members.

AKOMA, in its first year, was featured at numerous local programs and concerts. On June 22,1996, AKOMA made its debut concert and established the Nona Patterson Chambers Scholarship in honor of their elder member and adopted choir mother. In this first year, Mother Nona's Scholarship was awarded to three recipients.

Since its inception year, AKOMA has been privileged to sing as the backup vocal group for Grammy Award winner Larnelle Harris, to appear on channel 13's "Many Voices, Many Visions" and to provide music for a program featuring Seattle poet Laureate Mona Lake Jones who wrote the poem, "A Room full of Sisters" which AKOMA has used as its introductory anthem. AKOMA also has been blessed to present a specially commissioned docudrama, "Stirring the Waters, Tending the Pots," at GeVa Theatre; provide music at programs honoring Bishop Desmond Tutu and United Methodist Bishop Violet Fisher; sing with the Penfield Symphony at several of their annual holiday concerts; participate in SUNY Plattsburgh's Gospel Concert; and sing at the Clarissa Street Festival.

In 2004, at the Strong Museum AKOMA participated in a major production titled, "From Struggle to Strength: Gospel Then and Now," in which the group chronicled in song the evolution of gospel music as a means of strength through the struggle for freedom. As a part of Strong Museum's, "Creating American Music," series Struggle was written and arranged by AKOMA's executive director, Dr. Arlette Miller Smith with assistance from Ramona Moore. The group also participated in the Baha'i Community's salute to cultural groups in the Rochester area.

Over the past year, AKOMA's ministry included the following engagements: we were asked to minister at the annual gospel concert for the Pennington-Moye VFW Post; the Penfield Symphony Annual Christmas Concert; the William Warfield Scholarship Concert; Memorial Art Gallery's & the Arts & Cultural Council's *Women's Voices: African American Gospel Singers Program* in honor of National Women's History Month; and the Alpha Phi Alpha 74th Eastern Regional Conference Sunday Worship Service.

Most importantly since our very first concert, AKOMA has awarded more than forty college-bound young women of African descent, the Nona Patterson Chambers Scholarship.

AKOMA desires to continue its ministry of music, spoken word, and service. For concert or other bookings, please call AKOMA's voice mail at 234-6860 or email us at akomagc@hotmail.com. Our website address is: www.akoma.org.

Black Women's Strength Through Struggle

You want to hear us hum just hum because
We are sometimes too weary from singing
The blues to remember the words?

You want to touch our field heavy
dishwater hands and trace the lines that tell a story
whose beginning was the beginning?

You want to know how we do it:
love, smile, dance, achieve, dream, [pray], stay sane and walk
affirmed in your world?

You want to know us,
Black women,
who do it all
in spite of it all?

First:
Do you believe in miracles?
(Gayles, Gloria W. *Anointed to Fly*. New York: Harlem River Press, 1991)

Author/educator Gloria Wade Gayles, in excerpts from her poem "For Those Who Are Trying to Understand Black Women," incorporates and alludes to the strength, determination, commitment, and the spiritual force that contribute to Black women's "keep on keepin' on" attitude. Interestingly Gayles' prosodic rhetorical questions are aherstorical from a chronological perspective. That is, the questions refer to both our past and our present as if they represent one continuous time period; yet Gayles' questions also are hyperherstorical in their references to our condition as a colonized people, as colonized bodies. But the questions posed by Gayles to an unnamed oppressor do not signal defeat, exhaustion, dejection, or denial. As one Biblical verse attests--- many of us look to the hills from whence cometh our help. Gayles refers to that looking and seeking as our spiritual belief in being sustained by and through miracles.

In another verse of her poem, Gayles reinforces our will to never give up but to resist and struggle on---in spite of physical and mental exhaustion. Even when our song is too tired to leave our weary throats because it has been sung over and over again, something/The someone helps us continue to summon the strength of resistance: we "hum just hum because we are sometimes too weary from singing the blues to remember the words" (24). Gayles poetic declaration is as much a reminder for us as the bearers of the burden of being Black and female, as it is a defiant warning to the oppressor. As one of the unpenned (Brooks-Bertram quoted in Wilson) heroes of the Montgomery Boycott (1955) said: "My feets is tired but my soul is rested." (unknown source). Likewise, as a community of Black women ---our bodies, our feet, hands, mouths, eyes, and shoulders may be tired from bearing it all, seeing it all, tasting the bile of it all, but our resolve to resist, resist, and resist some more is strengthened "in spite of it all." We have forged the proverbial "way out of no way" with support from myriad networks, none more powerful than our Savior, our families, our rock solid men and the community of other Black women who---from our first disembarkation from the rank holes of the Middle Passage and on to the shores of the Americas---- have found the ways and means to achieve the greatest resistance of all---to thrive, not merely survive! If Black enslaved women during slavery seemed exceptionally strong, it was partly because we often functioned in groups and derived strength from our numbers (Gray White, *Aren't I A Woman* 119)....were sustained by our group activities... forged our own independent definition of womanhood through the female network...which we could relate to on the basis of our own notions about what women should be and how we should act (141).

We know what a woman ought to be, do, and know. And we know who we are because we know Whose we are and where love abides within community. Our songs, our spoken words, our unswerving faith, our passion for *The* good news --- all sustain us. Along the way, struggle may temporarily deter us but, as Wade Gayles says, we are always "pushed back to strength."

Thank you for joining the AKOMA sisterhood today; for saluting our newest scholarship recipients; for knowing that from struggle comes strength; for singing with us the sacred songs of our sisterhood.

Dr. Arlette Miller Smith
On behalf of the Sisters of AKOMA
June, 2006