



**African American
Women's Gospel Choir**

Give Thanks

1 Thessalonians 5:18



Dr. Arlette Miller Smith
Founder and Artistic Director



Ms. Gloria Ann Brooks
Executive Music Director



**22nd ANNUAL
SCHOLARSHIP CONCERT**

Mt. Olivet Baptist Church
141 Adams Street - Rochester, NY 14608

Saturday, June 10, 2017
6:30 p.m.

AKOMA: A HERSTORJCAL CHRONOLOGY

AKOMA HERSTORY 2016-2017

We cannot change the past, but we can change our attitude toward it. Uproot guilt & plant forgiveness. Tear out arrogance & seed humility.
Exchange LOVE for hate; [thereby, making the present comfortable & the future promising.] -Maya Angelou

OVERVIEW

AKOMA is Rochester's African American Women's Gospel Choir whose West African Akan name means patience, endurance, consistency and faithfulness. AKOMA's Adinkra symbol, the heart, indicates compassion, tenderness and charity. AKOMA's vocal and spoken word ministry is rooted in the African American sacred song and oral traditions.

After a debut performance in August of 1995 for Woman 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 reflects their diverse faith traditions and love for gospel music. The group adopted the name AKOMA because it symbolizes their African heritage, spiritual roots and desire to serve the Rochester community. Dr. David A. Anderson/Sankofa recommended the name AKOMA, based on research and knowledge of the group's mission. Twenty six Rochester area churches currently are represented on AKOMA's 2016-2017 roster of 52 active sister-members.

On June 22, 1996, AKOMA made her debut concert and established the Nona Patterson Chambers (NPC) Scholarship in honor of her elder member and adopted mother. Three recipients received the Mother Nona Scholarship in its first year. Since that time and including the nine 2017 recipients, AKOMA has awarded one hundred and fourteen college-bound young African American women, a portion of the more than \$126,000 collected as a part of the NPC Scholarship fund.

2016-2017 AKOMA Concert Year

Under the dedicated leadership of Founder/Executive Director, Dr. Arlette Miller Smith, and Executive Music Director, Gloria Brooks AKOMA began her program year singing on the Gospel stage at the Clarissa Street reunion in August, 2016. She was invited to participate in the Fringe Festival in Kilbourn Hall on September 18th. The fall season also began the launch of AKOMA's new website. In October, she sang during the Harvest Festival celebrated at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church. November found her presenting a concert at the historic Century Club of Rochester's building at the club's invitation. On March 2, 2017 AKOMA again shared praises with the Voices of Thunder during the City of Rochester's annual Heritage Concert. At the invitation of Grace Choir, AKOMA presented a joint service of praise at Memorial AME Zion Church on March 26th. She joined with St. Luke Tabernacle Community Church to render selections during its Spring Revival Service on May 17th. AKOMA's official concert season will culminate with her twenty-second annual Scholarship Concert on Saturday June 10, 2017 at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church. However, she will participate in celebrating the retirement on June 23, 2017 of her Executive Music Director, Gloria Brooks, from teaching in the Rochester City School District.

ADDITIONAL CHRONOLOGY (See AKOMA.org for complete herstory)

Since her 1995 inception year, AKOMA has been privileged to sing with Grammy Award winner Larnelle Harris; to appear on a number of local television shows; to provide music for a program featuring Seattle poet laureate Mona Lake Jones who wrote the poem, "A Room Full of Sisters" which AKOMA uses as her spoken word anthem; to provide the music for programs honoring Bishop Desmond Tutu; to sing with the Penfield Symphony at several of their annual holiday concerts; and to be featured at the National Black Catholic Congress Conference in Buffalo, New York. Early in her spiritual life, AKOMA also was blessed to present a commissioned docudrama, "Stirring the Waters, Tending the Pots," written by her founder, Arlette Miller Smith. "Stirring," a suffrage-related drama, was performed at Geva Theatre as a part of the 150th anniversary of the women's rights convention at Seneca Falls.

AKOMA's current Executive Music Director is Gloria Brooks; the Scholarship Commission Chair is Donna M. Jones; the Director of Bookings and Concert Confirmation is Ruth Anderson. The Founder, Executive & Artistic Director is Dr. Arlette Miller Smith.

The herstory of AKOMA's evolution as an organization is the title of the unpublished dissertation: *Speaking the Song, Spreading the Word, Lifting the People---The Reimagination of Community Through Vocal Music Activism* (2005) by Dr. Arlette Miller Smith. Allison Thorp's 2016 dissertation, *Testify, Heal, Empower: A Phenomenological Investigation of Three Urban, socially Identified, Community Choirs*, includes the music, message, and ministry of AKOMA.

For AKOMA concert bookings, please email akomagc@gmail.com; visit our website at www.akoma.org; "like" us on Facebook; and Twitter.

And with my song... will I praise Him. (Ps. 28:7)



The tired among us, must recharge their batteries.
 The uninitiated must learn and gird their loins.
 We have not finished the job of making our country whole. -James Farmer

When the door is closed, you must learn to slide across the crack of the sill.
 ~Yoruba Proverb

Nona Patterson Chambers Scholarship (June 30, 1910—December 24, 2011)

The Nona Patterson Chambers Scholarship was named in honor of our AKOMA mother, Nona Patterson Chambers. Mother Nona’s life exemplified the meaning of the word AKOMA because she demonstrated patience, endurance, consistency and faithfulness. As a revered elder of Faith Covenant National Church of God in Christ, Mother Nona encouraged all youth. She served as an example of what it means to be a dedicated and humble Christian. Mother Nona received a third grade education but returned to school as an adult to complete her education. Her quiet manner, Christian beliefs, and steadfast loyalty to her family and choir make it fitting that AKOMA’s scholarship is named in her honor.

2016-2017 AKOMA SCHOLARSHIP COMMISSION

Donna M. Jones - Chairperson

Ruth Anderson
 Colette Hardaway
 Gloria McCullough
 Rita Mitchell
 Rose Stokes

Patricia Floyd
 Donna M. Jones
 Emma “Cheri” Miller
 Esther Pinkston
 Wynndy Turner

2017 AKOMA NPC Scholarship Recipients

Sydney Barrett

Sydney Barrett is the daughter of Melissa and Basil Barrett. She will graduate from Fairport High School as an Urban League Black Scholar and will attend Xavier University and majoring in Biology and Public Health Policy with the goal of becoming an OB/Gyn physician. Sydney is a member of the National Honor and Spanish National Honor Societies as well as being a Board of Education Student Representative. She is a cellist in the Fairport Orchestra and Founding member/Co-President of the Demonstrate Racial Equality 4 All Mankind Club.

Sydney’s numerous honors include (SOAR) Stress on Analytical Reasoning Program at Xavier University of Louisiana, Science Technology Entry Program Scholar at the University of Rochester School of Medicine & Dentistry. Twice she received the High Honor Roll Academic Excellence Award. Her leadership skills were demonstrated during her tenure as editor of the Dimensions Club.

Sydney is an active member of Aeon Baptist Church and serves in the Alpha Youth Performing Arts Ministry, as a youth usher and Vacation Bible School counselor.

Olivia Brumfield

The University of Rochester is the next stop for **Olivia Brumfield**. She plans to major in Neuro Science and Pre Medicine. Olivia will graduate from Caledonia Mumford High School as the Valedictorian of her class. Olivia is the daughter of Brenda Brumfield and the late George Brumfield.

She is a member of the National Honor Society and is a Urban League Black Scholar. In addition to her academic achievements, Olivia is a scholar athlete in soccer and track. News 10 NBC recently honored Olivia as Scholar Athlete of the Week.

Christian Friendship Baptist Church has experienced Olivia’s service. She has served as Youth President, member of the youth choir, Missionary Board and Youth Praise and Worship Team. She has volunteered in the community service at Food Link, Blood Drives and soup kitchens.

2017 AKOMA Scholarship Recipients (cont'd)

Allea Frazier

Allea Frazier is the daughter of Roxanne and Saul Frazier. She will graduate from Bishop Kearney High School as an Urban League Black Scholar and plans to attend the University of Buffalo where she intends to major in Forensic Psychology.

Allea is a member of the National Honor Society as well as the American Chemical Society. Additional academic achievements include the National Academy of Future Scientists and Technologist Award of Excellence. She was selected to represent Bishop Kearney High School and the State of New York in the Congress of Future Science and Technology Leaders.

Her extra-curricular activities include Varsity Track and Field, Varsity Cheerleading and the Key Club. She has volunteered with Submit Senior Living, and Action for a Better Community programs and somehow she managed to accrue an extensive employment history. Allea participates in Memorial AME Zion Church through Bible Study, the teen group and as a service greeter.

Serita Lewis

Serita Lewis is the daughter of Wardell and Linda Lewis. A senior at Greece Olympia School she will graduate with Salutatory Honors as an Urban League Black Scholar. Her intention is to attend Skidmore College as a Political Science major. Her goal is to become a lawyer or lobbyist.

Soccer, lacrosse, track and symphonic and jazz bands are Serita's extra-curricular activities. She has maintained her place on high honor roll as well as achieving National Honor Society status. She has volunteered for Foodlink and Relay for Life. Serita finds time for paid employment.

Serita serves her church, Genesee Baptist, by ushering, through her musical gifts of singing, playing her wind instruments and acting in church plays. She also organizes the church's choir music.



The 2017 recipients have been awarded scholarships by the AKOMA Scholarship Committee based on their grade point averages; written essay; school, church and community activities; letters of reference and personal interviews. The recipients' biographical information provided by Commissioner Ruth Anderson.

Makaila Marshall

Makaila Marshall will graduate from Irondequoit High School as an Urban League Black Scholar. Her parents are Anthony Marshall and La-Shonda Robinson. She is a member of the National Honor Society as well as the National Technical Honor Society. Makaila will be a freshman at Spelman College who plans to major in Early Childhood Education.

Her school activities have included being a member of the Link Crew, the softball team and captain of the cheerleading team. She is also involved in peer leadership and the prom committee. In addition to her core classes at Irondequoit High she completed classes to obtain her cosmetology license.

Makaila volunteers with the children's ministry at The Father's House. She has volunteered as a coach of the Rochester Rams' cheerleaders, worked as an assistant teacher at the Freedom School summer program as well as being employed at a restaurant.

Thandi Moses

George and Precious Moses are the parents of **Thandi Moses** who is graduating from Brockport High School as an Urban League Black Scholar. She achieved consistent high honor roll status and will graduate a year early. The next phase in her life will begin when she enrolls at Florida Memorial University in Miami Gardens as a Law and Government major. She intends to become a corporate lawyer. Thandi's honors include the Principal's Award and a Sports Leadership award.

During her high school years she has been the leader of the Principal's Advisory Council a member of the Diversity Club and participated in the activities of FLEC (Focus, Learn, Engage & Connect), a student group which works with incoming freshmen to assist them in acclimating to high school. She also participated in the cheerleading and track teams.

Thandi has made time to be a part of the Southside Cyclones Pop Warner Football League and to be a Junior Servant Leader at Freedom School and its Freedom Café.

At Provision Full Gospel Church Thandi has been a member of the dance/flag team. She assists the Sunday School teacher and participates in Youth Sunday activities.

2017 AKOMA Scholarship Recipients (cont'd)

Telle Seaborn

Telle Seaborn's parents are Timothy and Jalanda Seaborn. Telle will graduate from James Monroe High School as a Black Scholar and plans to attend Oakwood University. She achieved High Honor Roll status and perfect attendance throughout her school career. She is also a member of the National Honor Society. Telle's awards include a Regional Chemistry Award, the Bausch & Lomb Honorary Science Award from the University of Rochester, the Innovation and Creativity Award and Scholarship Program at Rochester Institute of Technology and the Susan B. Anthony Award from the Rochester City School District.

Her extra-curricular activities include admission to the Hillside Scholarship Program, Upward Bound programs, lifeguarding class and the Teen Health and Success Partnership Program. As part of the Seventh Day Adventist Orion Stars Pathfinders Club, Telle volunteered with the soup kitchen and serves as the class teacher/counselor.

At Jefferson Ave. Seventh Day Adventist Church, she is a member of the choir, is the secretary of the Adventist Youth Society and a junior usher.

Elisha Snow

Elisha Snow's parents are Robert and Bernadette Snow. Elisha will complete her studies at Rush-Henrietta Senior High as an Urban League Black Scholar and attend Clarkson University to major in Chemical Engineering. She is a member of the National Honor Society and the National Society of High School Scholars.

She is a member of the Rush-Henrietta Singers, a select choir, and has traveled to Europe with them. Elisha is President of the African American Leadership League and performs with the school's MLK Singers. She was student director of the school's production of "A Raisin in the Sun." The STEM program at RIT has provided her with other learning opportunities.

In the community she volunteers as a camp counselor. In spite of having a busy schedule she manages part time employment. At Genesee Baptist Church, Elisha is a member of the youth choir, has participated in youth plays and is an usher.



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Destiny Williams

Destiny Williams' grandmother is Joe-Ethel Williams. She will graduate from Brockport High School as an Urban League Black Scholar and plans to attend Monroe Community College. Her plans include majoring in Physical Education and Exercise Science to prepare for a career as a physical therapist. She achieved membership in the National Honor Society, had perfect attendance and attained the Excelsior Honor Program as well as obtaining High Honor Roll status.

Her extracurricular activities are Mathletes, the Diversity Club and she is a FLEC leader for students transitioning from middle to high school. She assists with the school blood drive and participates with the school's Peace Day. Destiny's volunteer activities include the annual Breast Cancer Walk, packing food for Haiti, assisting with the Healthy Hero family event and volunteering at Baird Nursing Home.

Destiny attends St. Luke St. Simon Cyrene Church where as an acolyte she carries the torches and cross. On occasion she is called upon to read the lessons.

“Give Thanks”

AKOMA's 22nd Annual Scholarship Concert Programme

1 Thessalonians 5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. *KJ version*

♥♥♥ Praise, Prayer, Preparation ♥♥♥

Director of Ceremonies

Dr. Arlette Miller Smith,
Founder/Artistic Director

Processional

Tubano Ensemble
Joseph C. Wilson Magnet
High School Commencement Academy
Embry Freeman, Director

AKOMA Introduction

Rita Mitchell, Past AKOMA President

Welcome

Dr. Arlette Miller Smith

Invocation

Rev. Patrick Crumity
Youth Pastor
Mt. Olivet Baptist Church

♥♥♥ Part I ♥♥♥

“I AmThe One”

Composer: Kurt Karr
Soloist: Carmen Allen
Director: Kathy Damann

“O Give Thanks”

Composer: New Birth Total Praise Choir
Director: Gloria Brooks
Accompanist: Sherie Walker Hill

“GOD's On Your Side”

Composer: Mississippi Mass Choir
Soloist: Moreen Anderson
Director: Kathy Damann

“War”

Composer: Charles Jenkins
Soloist: Georgia Prescott
Director: Colette Hardaway

♥♥♥ Nona Patterson Chambers Scholarship Recognition ♥♥♥

Scholarship Presentations

Donna M. Jones: Scholarship Commission Chair &
Commission Members

♥♥♥ Part II ♥♥♥

Selections

Tubano Ensemble

Offering

Mt. Olivet Ushers & AKOMA Men

Offering Prayer

Sister Maggie Moore Holley

♥♥♥ **Part III** ♥♥♥

“Come Ye Disconsolate”

**Composer: Ted & Sheri
Duet: Arneska Harvey & Barbara Johnson
Director: Colette Hardaway**

“Oh Jesus”

**Composer: Dorothy Norwood
Soloist: Maggie Moore Holley
Director: Colette Hardaway**

“My Testimony”

**Composer: Vashawn Mitchell
Soloist: Shelly Fowler
Director: Colette Hardaway**

Special Prayer/Benediction

Rev. Patrick Crumity

Recessional

Tubano Ensemble

♥♥♥ **GLORIA ANN BROOKS, Executive Music Director** ♥♥♥

Evangelist Gloria Ann Brooks is a native of the state of Florida. She attended Stetson University in DeLand, Florida where she received a Bachelor of Music. She came to Rochester, NY to pursue a Master of Music degree from the prestigious Eastman School of Music.

After completing the Teacher Certification Program, she became a Music Teacher for the Rochester City School District. Presently, she works as Music Teacher at The Leadership Academy For Young Men.

Evangelist Brooks has served as both musician and choir director for numerous churches in the Rochester Community. Currently, she serves as Minister of Music at two Churches: Her Home Church, Joint Heirs Kingdom Ministries under the Leadership of Pastor Darryl Carter, and at Immaculate Conception Church.

Evangelist Brooks has received numerous honors and awards. She was selected to receive the South Lake Black Achiever’s Award in Leesburg, FL. She has been honored by Rochester’s distinguished “Links” Society and received the White Rose Friendship Community Service Award. MJS Productions presented her with the 2016 Artistry Award.

Evangelist Brooks became the Music Director for AKOMA in the Fall of 2012. Not only is she an accomplished musician and director of music, but also she is anointed by God. She is a woman of God who is dedicated and committed to ministering healing to the sick, deliverance to the captives and encouragement to the saints through her ministry of music. She considers this to be her primary mission in life. Evangelist Brooks gives God all the glory for her many accomplishments and is looking for God to do even “GREATER” things in and through her as she retires from teaching in the Rochester City School District on June 23rd.

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I Thessalonians 5:18

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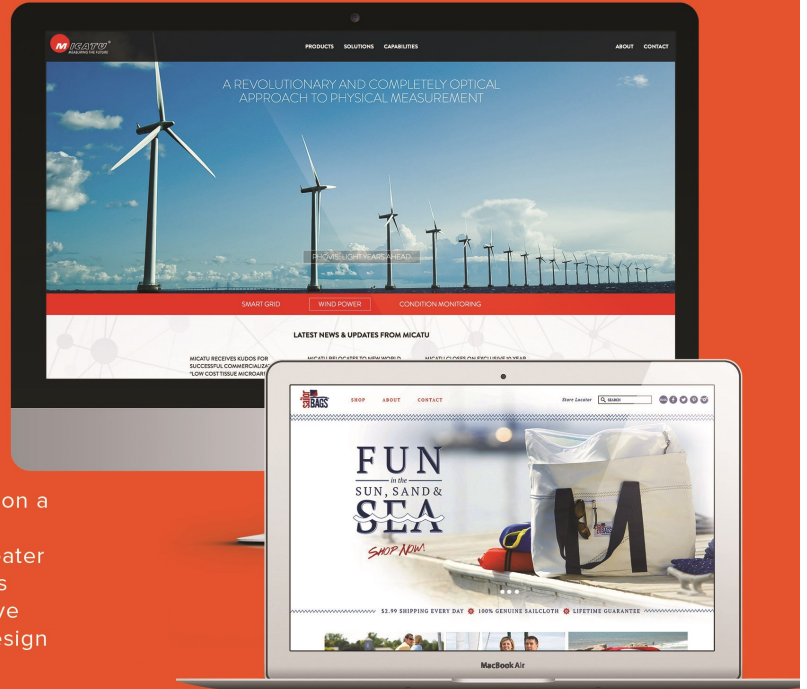
Adinkra symbols legend: Sankofa (sang-ko-fah): wisdom “Go back and fetch it”; Nsoroma (n-soar-row-mah): faith & leadership; Tabono (tah-bow-no): strength and persistence; Hye-Wo-Nhye (she-wo-n-shee): forgiveness & durability; Nyame Nti (n-yah-may n-tee): by God’s grace.

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Breath of Life SDA

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Deseree Bliss
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Pastor: Phil Harlow
Phyllis Griffin

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Pastor: Steve & Darla Edlin
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Gloria McCullough

Full Gospel Tabernacle

Pastor: Ernest Walker, Jr.
Patricia Starks
Clara Warfield

Goodwill Baptist

Pastor: Rev. James L. Cuyler
Emma "Cheri" Miller
Michelle Antionette Miller

Greece Assembly of God

Pastor: Patrick Medeiros
Kathy Damann

Greystone Church

Pastor: Brian Warner
Dr. Arlette Miller Smith

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Rose Stokes

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Pastor: James Cooper
Beatrice Harris

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Pastor: Rev. Dr. Kenneth Q. James
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Dr. Twyla Cummings
Amanda Darden
Arneska Harvey
Magelene Moore-Holley
Ella Reed
Wynndy Turner
Sylvia Walker
Eunice White

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Anita Terrell

Mt. Vernon Baptist

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Harmon E. Stockdale
Rita Mitchell

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Colette Hardaway
Julia A. Lawson
Anita Simpson
Gloria Wilson

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