



2 Corinthians 5:17

ANO MA

African American Women's Gospel Choir

Saturday, June 8, 2019 6:30 p.m. Freewill Offering

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

24th Annual Scholarship Concert

Dr. Arlette Miller Smith

Founder and Artistic Director

Miss Gloria Brooks

Executive Music Director

AKOMA: A HERSTORJCAL CHRONOLOGY

AKOMA HERSTORY 2018-2019

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.] -Mava 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 Votethe 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-two Rochester area churches currently are represented on AKOMA's 2019 roster of forty-four active sistermembers.

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 seven 2019 recipients, AKOMA has awarded one hundred and thirty-two college-bound young African American women, a portion of the more than \$177,184 collected as a part of the NPC Scholarship fund.

2018-2019 AKOMA Concert Year

AKOMA

AKOMA's twenty-fourth concert year began with a concert on the Gospel Exchange stage at the Clarissa Street Reunion August 18, 2018 under the direction of Executive Music Director, Gloria Brooks. With the continuing leadership of Founder/ Executive Director, Dr. Arlette Miller Smith, AKOMA participated in the Episcopal Senior Life Communities' "Music Through the Ages" program. In November she was invited to sing for a concert benefiting both Asbury First Methodist Church's community programs and AKOMA's scholarship fund. AKOMA again shared praises with the Voices of Thunder during the City of Rochester's Annual Heritage Concert on February 26, 2019. AKOMA is looking forward to her twenty-fourth annual scholarship on June 8, 2019 at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church when she will present seven young ladies with her Nona Patterson Chambers Scholarship. On June 23, 2019 the sisters of AKOMA will sing praises at Sonnenberg Gardens in Canandaigua.

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 akomage@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)



When girls are educated, their countries become stronger and more prosperous. \sim Michelle Obama

Knowledge is like a garden; if it is not cultivated, it cannot be harvested. ~ African 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.

2018-2019 AKOMA SCHOLARSHIP COMMISSION

Donna M. Jones - Chairperson



Emma "Cheri" Miller, Ruth Anderson, Esther Pinkston, Donna M. Jones, Gloria McCullough, Wynndy Turner and Rose Stokes

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

2019 AKOMA NPC Scholarship Recipients

Nolawit W. Belachew

Nolawit Belachew's parents are Belachew Dargie and Sara Negussie. She will graduate from Brighton High School as an Urban League Black Scholar and attend SUNY Binghamton majoring in Biology or Psychology. She aspires to become a Doctor. Her activities include Black Student Union - Treasurer, Key Club - Treasurer, LINK Crew, Helping Hands Club, Model UN - Student Senate Representative and Field Hockey. Nolawit (or Noli as she is affectionately called) attends St. Peter and Paul Coptic Orthodox Church and St. Shenouda Monastery where she is active at the weekly youth meetings, monthly dinners for the homeless, Liturgy and Bi-Annual Theological Conventions.

Shalese T. Cotton

Shalese is the daughter of Shelia Cotton. She will graduate from Penfield High School where she participates in the Urban – Suburban program. She is an Urban League Black Scholar and will attend Howard University majoring in Political Science. She hopes to become a Lawyer and one day open her own Law Firm. Her activities include Mock Trial Club, Mosaic Club - Founder, Summit on Race - Delegate and Sources of Strength. Shalese attends Love Fellowship Worship Center where she serves as a Praise Team Dancer and in the Children's Ministry. Shalese also participates in the PAR (Prepared, Aware and Ready) Youth Group and the Tutoring/College and Career Readiness Program.

Cierra V. McFadden

Cierra's parents are John and Scharrenda McFadden. She will graduate from Rush Henrietta Senior High School and then attend Elmira College majoring in Pre-Medicine / Biology. She aspires to become a Pediatrician. Her activities include Martin Luther King (MLK) Singers, African American Leadership League (AALL) - Treasurer, Henrietta Youth Hall of Fame inductee and the Henrietta Youth Board. Cierra attends Bibleway Healing Assembly where she is active as a Teacher's Assistant in Children's Church, in the Youth department and as a Dream Team member.

<u>Jaidyah L. Brewer</u>

Jaidyah Brewer's mother is Chara Beale. She is an Urban League Black Scholar attending Greece Arcadia High School who plans to attend Monroe Community College with Psychology as her major. She intends to become a Counselor within the judicial system. Jaidyah's activities include Track and Field, Student Council and the Mosaic Club. She attends Bridge Builders Ministries where she is active in their youth group Soldiers Walking According to God (SWAG) and as a support to the Children's Ministry. She volunteers at the Spino Literacy Program.

Kyla R. Cunningham

Kyla's mother is Rhona Wallace. She is an Urban League Black Scholar at Gates Chili High School who plans to attend Morgan State University where she will major in Political Science with a minor in English. She desires to be a Prosecuting Attorney initially and then ultimately a Judge. Her activities include the Multi-Cultural International Club, Show Choir, Tri-M Music Honor Society, Cheerleading - Captain, Track and Field and SAVVY. Kyla attends Mt. Vernon Baptist Church where she serves in the Youth Choir, on the Junior Usher Board, as the Great Lakes Baptist Association Financial Secretary, as the Youth Announcement Clerk and in Vacation Bible School.

Chynna J. Sharp

Chynna's mother is Treva Warren. She is an Urban League Black Scholar attending Greece Athena High School where she is the class Salutatorian. In the fall she will attend Nazareth College majoring in Health and Rehabilitation Sciences / Exercise Science in the Fall. She desires to become a Physical Therapist. Her activities include Orchestra where she plays the violin, being a Freshman Mentor and participation in the National Honor Society. Chynna attends The Father's House where she serves in the Feed My Starving Children and Waddlers Childcare Ministries.

2019 AKOMA NPC Scholarship Recipients (cont'd)

Brianna M. Wade

Brianna is the daughter of Terri Owens. She will graduate from Vanguard Collegiate High School as an Urban League Black Scholar, ranked third in her class. She will attend SUNY Brockport majoring in Psychology with aspirations to become a School Counselor. Brianna's activities include Upward Bound, Senior Student Council - Treasurer, Hillside Work – Scholarship Connection, and the National Honor Society. Brianna attends The Greater Harvest Church where she serves as a Praise Dancer, Youth Assistant and a member of the Adult Choir.



The 2019 NPC Recipients have been awarded scholarships based on their grade point average; written essay; school, church and community activities; letters of recommendation; and personal interview. The recipients' biographical information is provided by Commissioner Donna M. Jones.

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Phu Concepts

"I'm Saved"

AKOMA's 24th Annual Scholarship Concert Programme

2 Corinthians 5:17 "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

Praise, Prayer, Preparation

Director of Ceremonies Sister Rita Mitchell

Processional

Invocation Sister Maggie Moore Holley

AKOMA Introduction Carmen Allen, Vice President

Welcome Sister Rita Mitchell

vvv Partivvv

"Come Let Us Worship"

Director: Kathy Damann
Music by Joseph Pace

"In The Midst Of It All"

Soloist: Carmen Allen
Director: Colette Hardaway
Music by Yolanda Adams

"I'm Saved"

Director: Colette Hardaway
Music by Dexter Walker

"Bless Me"

Soloist: Barbara Johnson
Director: Colette Hardaway
Music by Donald Lawrence

Nona Patterson Chambers Scholarship Recognition

Scholarship Presentations

Donna M. Jones: Scholarship Commission Chair & Commission Members

vvv Part II vvv

Offering Mt. Olivet Ushers & AKOMA Men

Offering Prayer

Rev. Dr. John Walker

Pastor, Christian Friendship Baptist Church



"Oh Freedom - Negro Spiritual"

"Grace"

"Not To Us"

Special Prayer/Benediction

Recessional

Director: Gloria Brooks

Narration: Esther Pinkston Director: Kathy Damann Music by T.D. Jakes

Soloist: Patricia Cathev Director: Kathy Damann Music by Ricky Dillard

Rev. Dr. John Walker Pastor, Christian Friendship Baptist Church



Special thanks to Rev. Dr. Rickey B. Harvey and the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church officers & members. Our grateful thanks to Rev. Dr. Dwight Fowler and the members of First Church of God for the continued use of their edifice for rehearsals and support over the years. AKOMA also gratefully acknowledges all of her special guests...vocal, musical & ministerial, her AKOMA men; the ushers, the offering collectors; friends of AKOMA and you, our 24th audience of supporters.



GLORIA ANN BROOKS, Executive Music Director



Evangelist Gloria Ann Brooks is a native of Florida. She graduated from Stetson University in DeLand, Florida with a Bachelor of Music degree. 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 from which she retired in June 2017.

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 her home Church, Joint Heirs Kingdom Ministries under the Leadership of Pastor Darryl Carter, and Immaculate Conception Church.

Ms. 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 September 2012. She continues to serve as the Music Director for the Omega Select Chorus.

Not only is she an accomplished musician and director of music, but 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.

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.



\sim SISTER ON THE OTHER SIDE 2019 \sim

OLIVE BELL WILLIAMS

June 7, 1922 - January 28, 2019

Olive Bell Williams was born in Chicago, Illinois, but moved to New York State with her family in 1939. The family first settled in Avon, later moving to Geneseo. Olive lived a long and rewarding

life until her passing.



She was a member of Second Baptist Church in Mumford, New York which was then pastored by the late Reverend Dr. Charles A. Thurman. She served the Second Baptist Church community in numerous capacities, including Women's Ministries during her 80 year tenure there.



Olive pursued studies at St. John Fisher College in Diversity and Aging; Genesee Ecumenical Ministries (GEM) Lay; School Theology and Ministries and the Program for Education and Action Responsible Leadership (P.E.A.R.L) at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School in

1995. For twenty-two years, she worked as a Socio-Therapist at the Convalescent Home for Children (now Crestwood Children's Center). Additional work experience included serving as the Minority Outreach Project Coordinator for the Rochester Alzheimer's Association.



Olive, an original member of AKOMA, served the sisterhood as its first elected Chaplain. She also assisted with various programming initiatives. Mother Williams faithfully attended AKOMA's Scholarship Concerts well into her 90's and continued her financial support until shortly before her death. AKOMA was indeed a family tradition: Olive's sister Marguerite also was a founding member, and Marguerite's daughter, Shelley Lucas, joined her mother and Aunt Olive. Although Olive's daughter, Olive Ruth Bedford was not an AKOMA sister, "Ruthie" (as Olive affectionately called her) also attended every concert when she was in town.



Olive Elizabeth Bell Williams was pre-deceased by her daughter, Olive Ruth Bedford, and sister Marguerite Ruth Bell Lucas. She was full of grace. Olive took immense pleasure in sunflowers probably because they reminded her of the brilliance of God's sun, as well as His Son. Mother Olive's favorite AKOMA song was "Order My Steps."

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2 Corinthians 5:17

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(Continued on page 10)

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World Dignity Records

** AKOMA's scholarship is named after Nona Patterson Chambers

Adinkra symbols legend: Sankofa (sang-ko-fah): wisdom "Go back and fetch it"; Nsoroma (n-soar-row-mah): faith & leadership; Tabono (tah-bowno): strength and persistence; Hye-Wo-Nhye (she-wo-n-shee): forgiveness & durability; Nyame Nti (n-yah-may n-tee): by God's grace; Eban: love, safety and security "fence".



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