

The Graces

The Official Newsletter of the Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc.



In This Issue

- MMSI Executive President Message
- #Giving Tuesday
- Checking In With MMSI Angela Pauling 2023 Scholar
- Melody On The Move!
- Comité Noviembre
- In Honor of Women
- Wellness Watch - Comfort Food
- Spotlight Activities & Save The Date

Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc.

45
years

December 14, 1978

MMSI Executive President Message

Dr. Nathalie Lilavois, Ed.D.
MMSI Executive President

Greetings!

As the year comes to a close, we're filled with a level of excitement that only seems to happen at this time of year. Excitement for a clean slate, a brand new chapter. This holiday season gives us a chance to reflect and evaluate our past successes and failures as we look ahead to a new year.

Was this year filled with achievements or was it one you'd prefer to forget? In either case, we get the chance to start afresh and plan for new goals and targets to hit. Remember, that every experience, every moment is a lesson and you will find yourself repeating these experiences until you learn from them. Only then can we move on.

Ask yourself these three questions:

- How did I grow this past year?
- What was the biggest challenge I overcame?
- What was I most grateful for?

Use these questions to guide you to make intentional choices for the upcoming year. Don't forget to acknowledge the important people in your life, not only through gifts, but with your own heartfelt words. Remember the importance of taking care of yourself as well, especially when you are feeling overwhelmed. That's the world telling you to prioritize, rest, and relax!

I wish you all a wonderful holiday season and the brightest new year!

Happy Holidays!

Please Support Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc. on #Giving Tuesday

www.MalikMelodies.org

Peaceful Greetings and Happy Holidays!

#GIVINGTUESDAY is a global generosity movement unleashing the power of people and organizations to transform their communities and the world on November 28, 2023, and every day. **#GivingTuesday** was created in 2012 as a simple idea: A day that encourages people to do good. On this **#GivingTuesday** we hope you will support **Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc. (MMSI)** with a gift that is significant to you. We are requesting your support for:

[The Angela Pauling Memorial Scholarship](#)

[WE LEAD:](#)

- * Empowering Our Girls Conference
- * Nurturing Our Leaders
- * We Inspire!

[The Asa Restoration Project](#)

Please enjoy our website links above to learn more about our programs and to make your secure contribution or visit: <https://www.malikmelodies.org/>. See below for other payment options.

Our work would not be possible without the support of our members and friends like you. Each gift helps us achieve our goal to provide scholarships, empower girls and women, and support groundbreaking history at the Asa Restoration Project in South Asaif Egypt. Our programs and initiatives impact hundreds of people in the U.S. and in Egypt. Your support helps make that impact possible. Your contribution will help us in 2024 to further develop the capacity of our programs, develop innovative programs/workshops, and improve the infrastructure to support our work.

DONATE ON LINE - To make your secure contribution visit: <https://www.malikmelodies.org/>.

DONATE BY CHECK - Payable to "Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc." and mail to P.O. Box 92944, Washington, DC 20090 and designate your earmarked donation in the subject line.

DONATE VIA ZELLE - To malikmelodies@gmail.com.

The **Angela Pauling Memorial Scholarship** is earmarked for a graduating senior at Angela's alma mater, Harry S. Truman in the Bronx, NY. Because of support from donors like you, in 2023 MMSI awarded FIVE scholarships for the first time! With your help, we look forward to issuing multiple scholarship awards again in 2024.

In 2018, MMSI launched the **Inaugural WE LEAD: Empowering Our Girls Conference** to highlight and address the needs and challenges girls face, while also promoting girls' empowerment and the fulfillment of their human rights. This amazing event provides motivating messages and workshops from women on the challenges they faced and how they pushed past them. The day culminates with the "Gems Among Us" Awards presentation, honoring outstanding individuals and organizations for their commitment to uplifting and empowering our girls. We look forward to hosting our 2024 conference and mid-year programs to Empower OUR Girls.

The Asa Restoration Project - Visit our web page to learn how MMSI has aided and how you can continue to help in reclaiming our history through the archaeological excavation, conservation and restoration of 26th Dynasty priest and noblemen tombs of Karakhamun, Karabasken and Irtieru in Egypt.

Please Donate and Join MMSI In Making a Difference -- THANK YOU for your Generosity!

Checking In With Our 2023 MMSI Angela Pauling Scholar



College Life: An Exploration of Personal Growth and Knowledge

By Kennedy Stewart

Hi there to all of you! Kennedy Stewart is how I go by. Morgan State University is where I am a freshman. I am a nursing major. The entire topic of my newsletter article is about my experiences currently as a freshman at my school.

You should know that college life is not simple. That's not easy, I really mean it. Everyone you speak with will agree that college is difficult and stressful. You must persevere even though there will be moments when you want to give up or question if you should be here at all. Be certain about the reason(s) you attended college. Just keep an optimistic attitude on things if things get difficult. My time in college has been decent. Regarding my tendency to remain to myself and be a little shy. That, in my opinion, made it more difficult. If I had stated that creating friends is simple and that I already have a group of friends, I would be lying. Don't misinterpret me, I consider a small number of my friends to be my true close friends. But even when making acquaintances in college, take great caution. Simply because everyone behaves differently overall and has varying histories and circumstances.

Always make wise friend selections. Regarding the aspect of the actual college experience, it was such a different atmosphere for me. Being away from home for more than a month and adjusting to college life was difficult. Considering that I don't share a room, it's almost like I'm living in my own place. It is good for me since it gets me ready for adulthood. I have to attend my classes on my own schedule and clean my room, which is relatively standard. However, I also need to buy groceries for my room. I will no longer be bugged to get up and go to class by my mother or siblings. The hardest thing was also having to get used to eating the same items that I get or can get. How picky of an eater I am. I never noticed I was until I started college. It's strange, since when I returned home for the Thanksgiving break, I had become passionate about exercising. My family told me that I had become "lighter". This seems to be closely related to my diet. Not to mention when I would eat. Contrary to what you might think, I don't eat whenever I want because I'm a college student. I follow my routine to perfection.

I therefore prefer not to venture too far from my daily routine or stray greatly from my regimen. It includes not eating anything after 10 p.m. I enjoy attending events that other organizations may host at my school when I have free time. Right now, the Caribbean Student Association is the sole club in which I participate. The workload for me is pretty decent but I know overtime it will get more challenging with the higher classes for nursing that I will take. Overall, though, college is what you make of it, even though at the moment I might only think it's sufficient. It is up to you to go grab it and make more out of it. Make the most of your time here and have fun.

Queen

Melody on the Move!



Dr. Annmarie Ledley is a OB/GYN physician located near Dallas, Texas area with 30 years of Obstetrical and Gynecological services under her belt. She has now transitioned to the Obstetrical hospitalists model working with OB hospitalist group since 2019. Previously, she provided Obstetrical and Gynecology care to the underserved population of Hunt, Collin, Delta, Fannin, and Kaufman at Carevide a federally qualified health center (FQHC) for over 10 years.

Dr. Ledley immigrated to USA in her adolescent years but never wavered from her dream of becoming a physician to impact the healthcare disparities. She attended one of the specialized high schools in Brooklyn, New York and later found her “people” when she attended college and joined the Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc. Her Medical education took her to Michigan but soon returned back to New York for the final stretch of her training.



The last 25 years she has lived in Texas but calls Brooklyn, New York her home. She has advanced her care with OB Hospitalist Group (OBHG) company from Hospitalist to a leadership position as a Site Director, and Market Medical Director. She presently oversees 6 Hospitalist programs in Texas and New Mexico. OBHG is the nation’s largest and only dedicated OB hospitalist provider located in 39 states and with more than 250 hospitals servicing immediate care for all pregnant women. Ob Hospitalist Group was founded on the vision and commitment that every expectant mother presenting to labor and delivery would receive consistent, unconditional, quality medical care from an experienced physician a perfect alignment with the goals and mission of Dr. Ledley.



What’s In The Future For Dr. Ledley?

She will be changing lives one person at time by providing excellent Obstetrical and Gynecological service, showing compassion and empathy to all, doing everything with integrity, and leaving this world better than when she arrived.



Comité Noviembre

By Lisa Marie Rodriguez

Established in 1987, Comité Noviembre is a nonprofit organization that commemorates and pays tribute to the contributions Puerto Ricans have made to this nation. Its mission is to create educational opportunities for youth through college scholarships, as well as promote, acknowledge, and create awareness, of the importance of young people knowing their rich culture, language, and history. Comité Noviembre creates open forums to discuss critical issues affecting the Puerto Rican community specifically in the areas of education, youth leadership development, and civic involvement. Comité Noviembre is the only collaboration of its kind in the United States that brings together the collective talents and resources of some of the oldest and most prestigious Puerto Rican organizations: ASPIRA of New York, Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños Hunter College/CUNY, El Museo del Barrio, Eugenio María de Hostos Community College/CUNY, Institute for the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Elderly, (IPR/HE), La Casa de la Herencia Cultural Puertorriqueña, Inc., La Fundación Nacional para la Cultura Popular-PR, Justice Committee: NCPRR, National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, (New York Chapter), Puerto Rican Institute for the Development of the Arts, Inc. (PRIDA) and the White Plains Puerto Rican Cultural Committee. This coordinating body plans and promotes Comité Noviembre's annual programs and events.

Twenty-seventh Annual Benefit Dinner
Celebrating 37 Years of Puerto Rican Culture
& History

Buscando Nuestras Raíces

2023 Puerto Rican Heritage
Nuestro Orgullo Awards

Honorees

Isabel Abisblaimán, Esq., Attorney at Law
Law Office of Isabel Abisblaimán, San Juan,
PR

Dr. Mildred Garcia, Chancellor, California
State University

Ivan Enrique Rodriguez, Composer,
Conductor &
Comité Noviembre Ernesto Malave Scholar

Belkis Moya, Pastor, Casa Amor, Fe y
Esperanza

The Alma y Corazón Award
Wallace Edgcombe, Arts Activist & Retired
Director
Hostos Center for the Performing Arts



Friday, November 17, 2023

The Water Club
500 East 30th Street, New York City
(on the East River on 30th Street)

6PM Cocktail Reception 7PM Dinner
6PM-8:30PM Silent Auction
Entertainment

The proceeds from this event go towards
Comité Noviembre scholarship and
youth leadership development programs
as well as our continued work in
Puerto Rico

In Honor of Women

Debra Watkins, MMSI WE LEAD: Empowering Our Girls Sponsor and Malik Melodies champion is a California native. She is best described as an extraordinary educator, much beloved institution builder, visionary leader, and philanthropist. She has a wealth of knowledge, networks, and experience which she freely shares to empower and uplift others. We celebrate Debra Watkins *In Honor of Women* for her global leadership and impact.

About Debra Watkins

Having spent 37 years in East Side Union High School District as a teacher, counselor and project manager, Debra was a founding member of the Santa Clara County Alliance of Black Educators (SCCABE) and served the organization as president for seven years. Her 2016 book, [Thoughts Held Hostage: A Black Teacher's Journey of Unlocking Young Minds](#), has been well-received in educational circles nationally.

In 2001, Debra founded both the California Alliance of African American Educators (CAAEE), and the [Dr. Frank S. Greene Scholars Program \(GSP\)](#). Named after an African American scientist who helped pave the way for today's computers, the GSP is a long-term, youth development STEM initiative for students of African ancestry. With 100% of its students enrolling in college, 90% graduating in four years with a BS or BA degree, and 60% of those degrees in STEM fields (eight times the national average for Black students), the GSP has garnered the support of companies in Silicon Valley ranging from Google to Texas Instruments to Cisco and Intel. In 2017, the CAAAE's name was changed to [A Black Education Network \(ABEN\)](#) to expand its influence across the country. With some of the most brilliant Black scholars on ABEN's Leadership Team, its board and its Wisdom circle, Debra's vision has led ABEN to create a series of signature programs.

For many years, Debra has worked with author and renowned researcher of ancient Egyptian history, science, philosophy and culture, [Anthony Browder](#), to develop and deliver a host of educational programs. In addition to cultural and STEM programming, ABEN's work also includes the Youth Civic Ambassadors for Justice; socially important learning activities that enhance student voices by encouraging African American political action and progress through allowing students to work with Jegnans (mentors) to create impactful civic projects focused on ameliorating conditions in the Black community. During the pandemic, Debra launched programming through ABEN to address the financial needs of marginalized families, enrich the online education of students, and support educators in making many pivots. With "The Families Fund," ABEN provided families with \$300 Visa gift cards to help mitigate the financial toll caused them by COVID-19. Furthermore, in collaboration with the [Sankofa Homeschool Community & Collective](#), ABEN implemented virtual, day trips around the nation of Ghana to help enrich the lives of 300 students and their families. "And How Are the Children?" was the program title of three webinars focused on connecting direct-service personnel and parents with the research of prominent educators from across the country. This series reached close to 1,000 people and was co-sponsored by the Silicon Valley Community Foundation.



Debra Watkins, M. Ed., MS
Founder & Executive Director of ABEN



In Honor of Women



In a world centered on using technology, at times at the loss of the human touch, Debra's approach is all about the personalization of the programming. She takes her network, the programs' participants, ABEN's members, and donors to create a healthy village; and bridges the gap between the university (Ivory Tower), direct-service professionals, and the students. In creating ABEN and servicing each aspect of this community, Debra has nurtured conversations between all three populations giving way to multi-generational collaboration, increased understanding, enhanced professional practice, and increased academic achievement. The work Debra leads is espoused in many education journals that the knowledge and skill of teachers and the appropriate learning environments at home and school increase the academic and behavioral outcomes of students. Nearly 8 years ago, she co-founded the [Black Students of California United \(BSCU\)](#) and was an active board member until 2023. She also serves on the National Coordinating Council for the Dignity in Schools Campaign (DSC) and devotes countless hours to helping to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline.



In 2022, ABEN Co-Sponsored the [John Henrick Clarke Enhanced History Project](#) and mural in Washington, DC for [IKG Cultural Resource Center](#) and successfully secured a grant from the Hewlett Foundation for the project. More recently in 2023, Debra Watkins is the Co-Executive Director of the documentary, [Global Assignment: The Life and Times of Dr. Runoko Rashidi](#).

Debra earned a B.A. in English with minors in French and Psychology from Pitzer College in 1976. She then entered Stanford University's Teacher Education Program and earned a Master's degree in Education as well as Life-time Teaching Credentials in English, French and Psychology in 1977. A second Master's degree in Counselor Education was granted in 1996 from San Jose State University.

One-on-One with Debra Watkins:

How has ABEN impacted your life? The impact of ABEN on my life is immeasurable. When I started the California Alliance of African American Educators (CAAAE) in 2001, I had no idea what an impact it would have for thousands of Black children, their families and the educators who worked with them. My Jegna, [Dr. Joyce King](#), kept encouraging me to extend that impact across the country. I was reluctant because I knew how much work it took to sustain a state-wide organization. After about five years of showing me awful data related to how Black students were faring outside of California, I accepted the challenge and the blessings in my life have flowed and flowed! I am incredibly grateful to have been used as an instrument by God to help Black children and Black-led organizations across this country and in several African countries. I am extremely humbled by the opportunity to be such a vessel.

What keeps you motivated to do the work that you do? Knowing that the lives of countless Black children and people who love them are better is primarily what motivates me. The realization that God chose and equipped me is also a motivating factor.

In Honor of Women

What's your superpower? Fundraising is a huge gift that has been bestowed upon me!

Who are your Sheroes and why? Dr. Joyce has been my Jegna for 22 years and she has poured countless hours into helping create my vision for Black education and implement it. Dr. Frances Cress Welsing's writings keep me grounded. My mother, who is now an ancestor, continues to inspire me by the unselfish devotion she had to all of her 10 children in spite of having to overcome many obstacles in her lifetime.

Where would you like to see ABEN in 5-years from now? ABEN will officially sunset as of 12/31/24 and I have tapped five legacy organizations to continue aspects of its work. They were introduced at our Blacknificent 20th anniversary gala held on October 7, 2023. ABEN's work will continue as long as these organizations exist.

What are you most proud of? I am most proud of being the founder of an award-winning STEM program that is 22 years old and thriving under the leadership of a woman I handpicked. [Dr. Ayodele Thomas](#) is the first Black woman to earn her PhD in electrical engineering from Stanford University in 2005. Her only daughter just graduated from the STEM program last June that I named after a pioneering Black scientist (Dr. Frank S. Greene) who made his fortune in Silicon Valley decades ago. Her only son will graduate from the Greene Scholars Program in June 2025. I am also proud of the fact that I am a co-founder of Black Students of California United (BSCU). I gathered three other people to help me create the BSCU eight years ago, raised its first \$500,000 incubated under CAAAE/ABEN, spun it off as its own 501(c)3 two years ago and it is thriving. I am also proud of the fact that I am a founding member of the Santa Clara County Alliance of Black Educators (SCCABE) established in 1982 and served as president from 1994-2001. I hand-picked my successor and he is still president of the organization, and it is thriving.

We are THANKFUL for Debra Watkins and all she brings into the universe! She is truly a Woman of Honor and Jegna! We Queens Salute the Queen in Her!

What is a Jegna?

Jegna (pronounced "Jeg-nah") is a word taken from the Amharic (Am-har-rick) language of Nubia that means a very brave person who is a protector of a culture, the rights of his or her people, and their land. A Jegna is one whose central focus is on the culture and character of one's people, who vows to speak the truth, is uncompromised, and full of integrity. Further, it refers to those who have produced an exceptionally high quality of work, and are unselfishly committed to their people and nation to teach our children the art and science of a politically conscious adulthood.



[Click Here](#) to see the WE LEAD Interview with Debra Watkins



Wellness Watch - Comfort Food



LENTIL SOUP by Tawanikka Smith



It's that time of year when our bodies crave that meal that's as warm and cozy as our soft fleece blankets and chunky socks. This lentil soup recipe checks off all the boxes for a great meal. It's budget friendly, healthy, easy to make, flavorful, and DELISH! Make it right and you'll have everyone begging for seconds....and thirds... Use green lentils, red lentils, brown lentils, or yellow lentils. Lentils are a superfood that's great for heart health. It may help regulating blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

NOTE: The recipe below was borrowed from Recipetineats.com. This is a guide. Personally, I allow the ancestors to guide me.

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped (white, brown, yellow)
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 large carrot, chopped (about 1 1/4 cups)
- 2 celery ribs, chopped (about 1 1/4 cups)
- 2 cups dried lentils, green or brown, rinsed (Note 1)
- 15 oz crushed tomato
- 1.5 quarts (6 cups) vegetable or chicken stock / broth, low sodium
- 1/2 tsp each cumin and coriander powder
- 1 1/2 tsp paprika powder
- 2 dried bay leaves
- 1 lemon (zest + juice)
- 1/4 tsp salt and pepper, each

Directions:

1. Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add garlic and onion, cook for 2 minutes.
2. Add celery and carrot. Cook for 7 - 10 minutes or until softened and the onion is sweet. Don't rush this step, it is key to the flavor base of the soup.
3. Add all remaining ingredients except the lemon and salt. Stir.
4. Increase heat and bring to simmer. Scoop scum on the surface off and discard (do this again during cooking if required). Place lid on and turn heat down to medium low. Simmer for 35 - 40 minutes or until lentils are soft.
5. Remove bay leaves.
6. Thicken Soup: Using a stick blender, do 2 or 3 quick whizzes to thicken the soup (see video below). Or transfer 2 cups to a blender, let it cool slightly, then hold lid with tea towel and blend then transfer back into pot.
7. Add a touch of water if you want to adjust soup consistency. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Grate over the zest of the lemon then add a squeeze of lemon juice just before serving. Garnish with parsley if desired and serve with warm crusty bread slathered liberally with butter!

Add-ons for more protein, you can add beef. I like to throw in a cup of quinoa to give it more depth.

SPOTLIGHT ACTIVITIES

Congratulations!

Lisa Love Whittington
 “[Renew Swagger](#)” (Apple TV Show)
 Denene Milner
 New Book “[One Blood](#)”
 Katherine Hutchinson-Hayes Podcast
 “[Murder, Mystery, and Mayhem Laced with Morality](#)”
 Kim Bright “[2023 Adopt-a-Family](#)”



MALIK MELODIES SISTERHOOD, INC.

45th
Virtual Anniversary Event

DECEMBER 14, 2023
 7:30- 9:00 PM

JOIN ZOOM MEETING
[HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/J/87548354941?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87548354941?pwd=GWUkR3lHdUJ2N2lWd0ZJR2J0O0t09)
 PWD=GWUkR3lHdUJ2N2lWd0ZJR2J0O0t09
 MEETING ID: 875 4835 4941
 PASSCODE: 45AMAZING!

JOIN US AS WE HONOR 45 YEARS OF HISTORY FOR MMSI. WE WILL HAVE A NIGHT OF MEMORIES AND FUN. BRING YOUR FAVORITE DRINK FOR A TOAST AND DOWNLOAD THE KAHOOT APP FOR A FUN HISTORY GAME!

JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE OUR LEGACY!





FROM THE REGAL SISTERS OF
 MALIK MELODIES SISTERHOOD, INC.



*Wishing You and Your Family
 Merry Christmas
 and
 Happy New Year
 filled with blessings, prosperity, and
 abundance*

December 26th, 2023 - January 1, 2024



Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc.

Virtual Retreat

January 12-14, 2024

Mix n Mingle

Business Meeting

Professional Development

and more!

Save the Date



The Graces

The Official Newsletter of the Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc.



Angela Pauling Memorial Scholarship

**\$20/24 Scholarship
Fundraising Campaign**

We Need Your Help
To Ensure Bright Young Minds
Can Fulfill Their Dreams Of
Attending College.

Please Support
Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc.
12th Annual Angela Pauling
Memorial Scholarship



DONATE ON-LINE with [PayPal](#), [Credit or Debit Card](#) at
<https://www.malikmelodies.org> OR

Via Zelle at: MalikMelodies@gmail.com

Check: Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc. - P.O. Box 92944, Wash., DC 20090

WE ARE THE
SHOULDERS OF TODAY
FOR TOMORROW'S
FUTURE!

MALIK MELODIES
SISTERHOOD, INC.



MMSI

*2024 Campaign
Please Donate Today!*



MMSI MONTHLY MEETINGS:

Executive Board – 2nd Tuesday of every month
at 8:00 pm

Professional Branch – 3rd Tuesday at 7:30 pm

The Graces Newsletter Staff – Last Wednesday
at 8:00 pm

The Graces Staff

*Kim J. Bright
Sharon Harleston
Lisa Rodriguez
Anita Wallace
Tawanikka Smith*

Executive Board

*Kim J. Bright, Co-Founder
Nathalie Lilavois, President
Sharon Harleston, Vice President
Mary Richardson, Parliamentarian
Lisa Rodriguez
Anita Wallace*

Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc.

*P.O. Box 260430
Bellerose, NY 11426*

*P.O. Box 92944
Washington, DC 20090*

*malikmelodies@gmail.com
www.malikmelodies.org*

