

The Graces

The Official Newsletter of the Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc.

March / April 2020



HERSTORY EDITION



I AM

BY MELODY KENDRA RIVERS

I am a, Woman of God. Queen to be. My throne has already been carved. The fictitious stories told by society, Tries to make me doubt, Who I am. But the overflowing river Nile, That my ancestors bathed in, Is in me too. Their reality is in my spirit. Their practice is my reality. Their reality is my currency. I am a Woman of God.

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HERSTORY MONTH

It's Time To Tell Her Story



A Look Back From Where IT Started

by GM Sharon Harleston



National Women's History Month is an honorary observance during the month of March designated in 1987 by the U.S. Congress in observance of women's greatest accomplishments throughout history.

Women's History Month in the United States grew out of a week-long celebration in 1978 of women's contributions to culture, history and society organized by the school district of Sonoma, California.

Presentations were given at dozens of schools, hundreds of students participated in a "Real Woman" essay contest, and a parade was held in downtown Santa Rosa, California. This idea soon caught on within communities, school districts and organizations across the nation. In 1980, President Jimmy Carter issued the first presidential proclamation declaring the week of March 8 as National Women's History Week. In 1981 the U.S. Congress passed a resolution establishing a national celebration. Six years later, the National Women's History Project successfully petitioned Congress to expand the event to the entire month of March.

Did you know?

To coincide with Women's History Month 2011 the White House issued a 50-year progress report on the status of women in the United States. The findings were younger women are now more likely than their male counterparts to hold a college degree and that the number of men and women in the labor force has nearly equalized.

*Empowered
Women
Empower
Women*

International Women's Day, a global celebration of the economic, political and social achievements of women, took place for the first time on March 8, 1911. All around the world, International Women's Day represents an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of women while calling for greater equality. The United Nations has sponsored International Women's Day since 1975. When adopting its resolution on the observance of International Women's Day, the United Nations General Assembly cited the following reasons: "To recognize the fact that securing peace and social progress and the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms require the active participation, equality and development of women; and to acknowledge the contribution of women to the strengthening of international peace and security."

Serving Is The Motive

Ella Baker by GM Sharon Harleston

Ella Jo Baker, born on December 13, 1903, in Norfolk, Virginia, is an African American woman of the civil rights Freedom Movement who inspired and guided emerging leaders. While growing up in North Carolina, she developed a sense for social justice early on, due in part to her grandmother's stories about life under slavery. As a slave, her grandmother had been whipped for refusing to marry a man chosen for her by the slave owner. Her grandmother's pride and resilience in the face of racism and injustice continued to inspire Ms. Baker throughout her life.

Ella Jo Baker studied at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. As a student she challenged school policies that she thought were unfair. After graduating in 1927 as class valedictorian, she moved to New York City and began joining social activist organizations.

In 1930 she joined the Young Negroes Cooperative League, whose purpose was to develop black economic power through collective planning. She also involved herself with several women's organizations. She was committed to economic justice for all people and once said, "People cannot be free until there is enough work in this land to give everybody a job." She played a pivotal role in organizations including the NAACP, Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

Ella Jo Baker's influence was reflected in the nickname she acquired: "Fundu," a Swahili word meaning a person who teaches a craft to the next generation. Ms. Baker continued to be a respected and influential leader in the fight for human and civil rights until her death on December 13, 1986, her 83rd birthday.



"You didn't see me on television, you didn't see news stories about me. The kind of role that I tried to play was to pick up pieces or put together pieces out of which I hoped organization might come. My theory is, strong people don't need strong leaders."

-Ella Baker



**To learn more about Ella Jo Baker visit:
<https://ellabakercenter.org/about/who-was-ella-baker>**

FIRE WOMAN

MOONEE RIVERS - FIRST ASSISTANT CHIEF

by Melody Kendra Rivers

You can constantly hear the whispers, "That's a woman driving that truck" and to see the amazed looks on men, women and children in our hometown Gordon Heights and at Harlem Day Parades, I was amazed too. Moonee Rivers is the First African American woman to be deemed as a Chief of the Gordon Heights Fire Department. Moonee's goals and aspirations did not entail in a volunteer position as firefighter let alone the First Assistant Chief. "No, I did not see myself pursuing my career as a Chief, just a volunteer, and that was a joke to me too," The members gave me an application and I checked all the boxes, including firematic without the understanding of what firematic stood for." Moonee comes from a lineage of firefighters; her grandfather was the illustrious Chief and Commissioner of the Gordon Heights Fire Department. You can walk in the streets of Gordon Heights today and they will enthusiastically give you an admirable story about the "late and great" Eddie Rivers, Sr. Other family members have dedicated their time and lives to this unique fire department, which has already made a place in history to be first and only all black fire department in the state of New York.



FIRE WOMAN

Rivers' experience as a firefighter is full of faith and courage, "I went to my first training in Firematic and saw what was required such as, driving the truck and learning how to put out the fires, I had many thoughts, but I am not person who gives up. I told myself, I'm just going to go with it." Moonee's position as the First Assistant Chief entails running drills, assurance of the engine company's functionality, delegating tasks and educating seasoned and new firefighters.

Moonee is not limited to her role as chief, she serves as president of the department which helps with fundraising, community service and responsibilities that ensure the upkeep of the department. Moonee started volunteering in 2007 and has high hopes to continue to serve with the Gordon Heights Fire Department. "I would like to continue the legacy of the Gordon Heights Fire Department, it started out of need and I want to continue to educate to serve my community." Also, Moonee Rivers is Melody Kendra Rivers' sister.



MELODY ON THE MOVE

Deirdre A. Avery BS.MT,HC

Deirdre Avery affectionately known as "Dee " or "Dede" is a product of the New York City public school education system. She attended Fiorello LaGuardia High School of Music and the Arts (the "Fame" School). Having the aptitude for Art but loving Science and Math, Deirdre attended Hunter College in NY City where she graduated in the early 80's with a B.S. in Medical Laboratory Sciences. Deirdre was always passionate for the art and sciences which inspired her to help others.



She started her professional career as a Clinical Microbiologist. She has worked at several prestigious institutions including Columbia Presbyterian Hospital and Northwell Health Systems during her journey. Deirdre decided to return to her roots and went back to school to obtain a health and wellness coach certificate at the Institute of Integrative Nutrition. Most recently Deirdre was called further in her journey to study religion and has now been ordained as an interfaith minister which has added to her path of awareness and sharing. Deirdre has had more than 40 years of experience working in the health field. She has worked in several diverse positions including assistant supervisor in the Microbiology Lab and a Clinical Trial Coordinator in Quality Management. She has now retired from the 9-5. Dee has always inspired to do more however, not being sure what it was until 10 years ago when she was introduced to some nutraceuticals which changed her life. Since, Dee is a caregiver and has experience health changes with her relatives and herself; she started sharing and educating all who would listen. This led Dee to start a health and wellness networking business with a company named Morinda now NEWAGE BEVERAGES (previously known as Tahitian Noni.)

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The products and knowledge gave her and her family a better quality of life. This success allowed Dee to share the science of being healthy and passion of making a difference in everyone's life she touched. Deirdre started to produce and host a weekly internet TV show called "Passion for Life with Dee and Friends" which remained in production for over 2-years starting in 2014 and ending in December 2016. Dee's goals were all about education and inspiration for all. The show can still be seen on YouTube in reruns. Dee also participates in health fairs and seminars spreading her passion for healthy living.

She has also had the opportunity to do a **TEDx at TedxDeerPark** and has also been featured on the radio sharing her message of passionate healthy living. She has been **honored by Body Shop TV, Inc**, and the Sickle Cell Organization as Dee is always about supporting the community.

Dee is a member of several empowerment groups who share her passion which include Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc., WPN, and Phenomenal Woman to name a few. Passionate about life, Dee believes education is the key to help people combat disease. Her mission is to teach us all about "why" diseases occur and "what" can be done to help your body live healthier, younger, and longer naturally. Dee advocates that you must obtain a healthy harmony and balance of body, mind and spirit. Dee is inspiring to work as an interfaith minister serving as a life, image and health coach where she is about working on self care and the empowerment of others to obtain the same. She is excited to work and help all including herself to reach their goals to live happy and stay healthy. This is only the beginning of Dee's journey. There is so much more to come, please tune in and follow Dee's pursuit for her and your Passion for Life.

**Be apart of
Dee's mission
statement
"Knowledge is
power! Share
your power!"**

**Dee is available for private
and/or group coaching and can
be reached at (917) 579-5221**

**Email davery.fit@gmail.com
Facebook / Instagram Deirdre
Avery
www.Morinda.com/3197295**

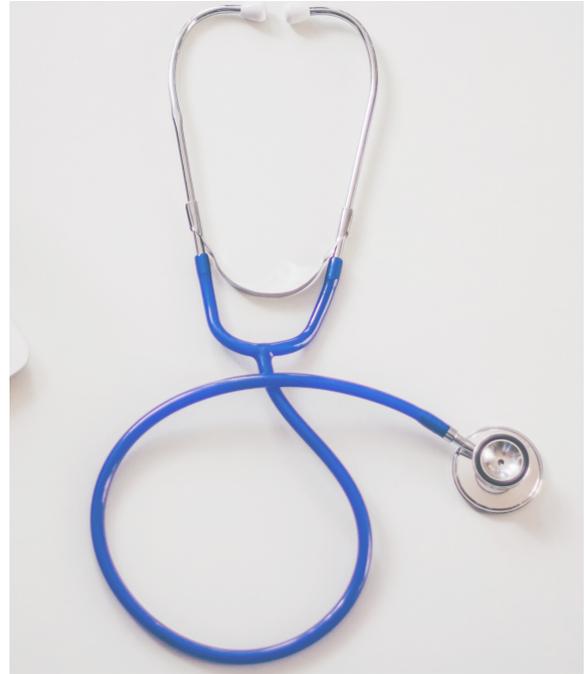
[TEDx Presentation](#)



Check Your Health

Is Your Sleep Healthy?

Sleep Awareness Week 2020 March 8-14. The annual event celebrates sleep health and encourages the public to prioritize sleep to improve their overall health and well-being. More than 18 million American adults have sleep apnea. In the 2005 Sleep in America poll, 8% of respondents experienced or had been observed having pauses in their breathing during sleep at least three nights per week. Adults in the poll were also given the Berlin questionnaire, a standardized test assessing risk for sleep apnea. Based on the questionnaire, 26% of all poll respondents were at risk. Click on the title for more information.



Stress Awareness

April marks the start of National Stress Awareness Month! This promotion of awareness started in 1992 to increase public awareness about both the causes and cures for our modern stress epidemic. By taking care of ourselves and recognizing certain signs, we can prevent relapse. One of the tools some people use is HALT. This handy acronym reminds us to take a moment (HALT) and ask ourselves if we are feeling Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired. It seems simple enough, but when these basic needs are not met, we are susceptible to self-destructive behaviors including relapse. Fortunately, hunger, anger, loneliness, and tiredness are easy to address and serve as a warning system before things reach a breaking point. Take a moment each day to check in with yourself. Ask, "Am I hungry, angry, lonely, or tired?" Honestly assessing how you feel takes only a minute. Doing so will make the everyday stress of life easier to deal with and help you maintain sobriety.

Check your H.A.L.T.



HUNGRY ANGRY LONELY TIRED

April is Jazz Appreciation Month

BY: GRACIOUS MELODY, ANITA GILLESPIE-WALLACE



Jazz Appreciation Month (affectionately and appropriately known as "JAM") is recognized nationally every April & it was created in 2001.

JAM is celebrated with music festivals, seminars and other events to honor and raise awareness about an original American art form that is often forgotten.

Wonderfully talented & charismatic artists with great showmanship were born from jazz. They faced GREAT adversity, discrimination & racism while paving the way for future jazz & R&B artists. Though jazz started in America it has world wide appeal with musical influences from Africa & Latin countries. Jazz has heavily influenced R&B, fusion, rap, various forms of dance, fashion, the Harlem Renaissance & the Civil Rights Movement. If you don't know the music of these music pioneers, you should at least know some of their names: *Duke Ellington, *Louis Armstrong, *Dizzy Gillespie, *Billie Holiday, *Sarah Vaughn, *Ella Fitzgerald, *Count Basie, *Miles Davis, *Nat King Cole, *John Coltrane, *Thelonious Monk, *Charlie Parker and more. To get a little more familiar with these artists & their music, view this YouTube clip: [Top 10 Influential Jazz Musicians](#)

CHECK OUT UPCOMING EVENTS:

2020 Women's Jazz Festival WEEK 3: RENEE NEUFVILLE
Monday, **March 16** @ Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Manhattan School Of Music: Harlem Stage Jazz Music Intensive Monday,
March 16 @ Harlem Stage

Earth Day

April 22, 2020

BY MELODY JILLIAN GIBSON

Earth Day began in 1970 and continues to grow as a worldwide phenomenon focused on promoting clean sustainable living for people and wildlife. It's a day to focus on take care of our natural resources and reducing our carbon footprint.

This year the theme of Earth Day 2020 is climate action.

Climate change represents the biggest challenge to the future of humanity and the life-support systems that make our world habitable. Each person can help protect their community by participating in a cleanup or taking part in local and global initiatives.

For more information regarding Earth Day 2020 check out:

www.earthday.org

April Is National Volunteer Month!

"TO SERVE YOU ONLY NEED A HEART FULL OF GRACE AND A SOUL GENERATED BY LOVE."

-DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Serving others is a great way to give back to others. At we try to give back to our community, there is no shame in receiving incentives or rewards in response to our community service. Here are some organizations to volunteer with that have some benefits.

The New York nonprofit group Sprout has teams of three leaders to escort 11 adults with disabilities on excursions, day trips around New York or even a week in Hawaii. Another option is joining a volunteering rewards program. Programs that let you earn rewards for volunteering have been increasing over the country. Thousands more are local groups with their own volunteer rewards programs, so it makes sense to check wherever you do good deeds.

Of course, yours truly Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc. will host a WE LEAD Conference to empower girls and women. The best incentive in volunteering with MMSI is giving back to your community and being connected to an organization who is bringing awareness to a cause. The conference will take place in the Bronx in October. To stay in the loop, check out our website:

www.malikmelodies.org

ONE MORE THING

WE COLLABORATE NOT COMPETE, WE SUPPORT NOT STEP OVER

Support Women-Owned Businesses

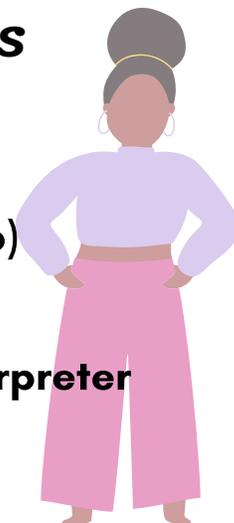
Anita Wallace, Nita Gee Jewelry
FB: Anita Gillespie Wallace

Erenisse Tavarez, Co-Owner - Tonnie's (Bake Shop)
info@tonniesminis.com
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Dr. Lisa Kirkland-Sutherland, Optometrist
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www.brighteyesvisioncare.net

Melissa Pacheco, Cert. American Sign Language Interpreter
MelPac Interpreting Services, LLC
Melpac.interpreting@gmail.com



Financial Literacy During Black History Month at Mount Sinai **By: Gracious Melody, Anita Gillespie-Wallace.**



Every year for Black History Month my supervisor hosts a weekly Financial Literacy Series at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. Historically people of color have been at an economic disadvantage and lack the financial literacy needed to get ahead. Over the last 4 years, Dr. Reginald Miller, Dean of Research Operations & Infrastructure has taken steps to change that. He's proven that it only takes one person to make a difference to educate others. The series consists of weekly meetings after work led by Anthea Perkinson, a licensed Financial Planner at Financial Planning Association of New York. The target audience are the medical students at Mount Sinai but all sessions are open to Mount Sinai staff and their friends and family. Melody, Bibi Chaterpateah joined our group for session 2 where we discussed savings techniques and resources and where we initiated the "Savings Challenge". You don't need a lot of money to start building wealth. All you need is basic information, determination and discipline.



Shout Out

Congratulations to our Sister Denene Millner

Denene Millner has signed her children's literature line, Denene Millner Books, to Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing. Millner Books will publish books created by African American authors and will launch Spring 2020.

THE GRACES STAFF

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UPCOMING EVENT:

MALIK MELODIES
SISTERHOOD, INC.
IS A PROUD
CO-HOST OF THE



Celebrating. Empowering. Educating.

APRIL 18TH
8:00AM - 5:00PM

WORKSHOP SAMPLER

- 8am Breakfast & Registration
- Workshops, Entertainment, Food
- No Walk-Ins. Register at: WomensDiversityNetwork.org
- Black Table Talk
- How to Raise a Strong, Smart, and Bold Girl
- Birth Equity
- Toxic Work Environments

Includes Workshops Appropriate for Youth. Volunteer Credits Available.

For more information:
<https://www.womensdiversitynetwork.org/events-1>

