

The Graces

The Official Newsletter of the Malik Melodies Sisterhood, Inc.



Sisterhood, Inc.



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May / June 2017

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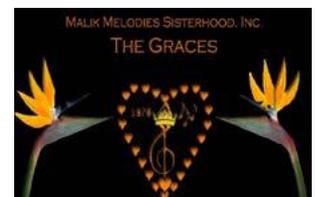
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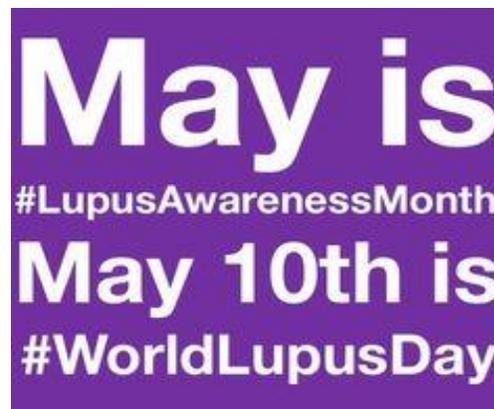
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Please send comments or ideas for articles for future newsletters to



MAY 2017





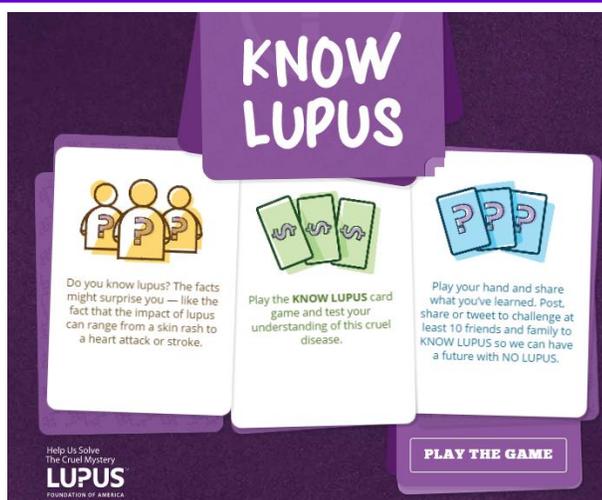
KIMBERLY GILGEOURS

Our Women & Wealth presenter, Kimberly Gilgeours, has been in the financial services industry for 30+ years, and is dedicated to helping people from all walks of life build a better future.

After more than 25 years in the corporate world, she now educates people on the cornerstones of a strong financial foundation.

Kimberly is also very active in the community. As a senior partner in the LI-SENG networking group, she has dedicated herself to helping the underserved and unemployed with their job search. An avid public speaker, Kimberly also encourages and mentors others who are working on their public speaking craft.

Kimberly is a member of Toastmasters International and is a Rotarian. She serves on a number of boards dedicated to making a difference in the lives of others through service above self.



The KNOW LUPUS card game was created by The Lupus Foundation of America as a part of their mission to improve the quality of life of everyone that lupus affects. We believe that to create a future with NO LUPUS, the public needs to KNOW LUPUS.

You can help us raise awareness about this cruel and mysterious disease by playing the game and challenging others to KNOW LUPUS.

<http://knowlupus.org/>

Let's Talk Retirement

By Kimberly Gilgeours

Funding retirement isn't what it used to be. For the past few generations of Americans, the traditional "3-Legged Stool" of Social Security, private pensions, and personal savings was enough.

Not anymore and it's not just about the economy.

The responsibility of retirement is shifting from employer and government programs to individuals, like **you** and me.

The new [Aegon Retirement Readiness Survey](#)* revealed only 12% of people around the world say that they are very prepared and already saving enough for their retirement. In fact, 39% don't have a retirement plan at all.

Moreover, there's a 28% savings gap between men and women when it comes to retirement! * The latest numbers have come in, and they're a doozy.

To retire at age 65 (without a career break):

- + Men need \$1,559,480
- + Women need \$1,717,779

That means women have to come up with \$158,299 more!

This is due to the unique set of circumstances women can face while preparing for retirement:

- + Women live longer
 - + Women pay more for healthcare
- So where are **YOU** on the Road to Retirement?

Kimberly Gilgeours
Registered Representative
World Financial Group
A Transamerica Company

* <https://www.aegon.com/en/Home/Research/Aegon-Retirement-Readiness-Survey-2015/>

* *Source: Financial Finesse 2016 Gender Gap in Financial Wellness Report*

Tawanikka Smith – Life with Lupus

On June 6, 2014, the day of my son's JHS graduation, I was officially diagnosed with Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE). This form of lupus is the most common, affecting any organ in the body. Women, mainly women of color, especially African- American, are the biggest population of lupus sufferers. My Internist, at the time called while we were celebrating at lunch. I was not shocked nor even upset. I was kind of expecting the news. The confirmation just put everything into perspective regarding what my body had been manifesting for a few years. I had been in a lupus flare for a very long time and didn't know it. The random swelling of my face. The pain in my joints. My fingers turning white, purple and numb in cooler environments. The hair loss. The swollen glands. The development of red, itchy, sometimes painful rashes throughout my body after being in the sun. The worst had been the extreme fatigue that I couldn't shake and the cognitive issues. I recall having to nap in my car one evening after work just to get enough energy to walk to the house. Once, I had forgotten to attend a funeral of someone very close to me. All of these symptoms, including the infamous malar (butterfly) rash across my face were some of the established criteria for SLE.

After the confirmation, I delved into exploring this disease to find out the triggers for flares and ways to control it since there is no known cure. With the help of my primary care physician, I found a rheumatologist who I thought could help me get it under control. Armed with education and prescribed drugs, I thought I had a handle on lupus, however; I missed the most important thing, respect. I underestimated the power of lupus; thus, I was unprepared for the wrath of it.

It didn't sink in that my body was literally fighting itself. I was literally my own enemy! It wasn't until I was hospitalized in December of 2015 that lupus earned my respect. An angry and violent rash had spread all over my body to the point of bleeding. The ER doctor suspected that I had Stephen Johnson's syndrome, a life-threatening disease and thought I might need to go to the Cornell Burn Unit to be treated. Fortunately (if one wants to call it fortune), it was confirmed that it was a severe lupus flare that had to be treated aggressively.

Six days later, I was discharged, shedding like a snake with a heavy dose of prednisone to take daily, among other drugs and a new respect for lupus. I was out of work for 3 months. I had to go to physical therapy 3 times a week to treat peripheral neuropathy (another gift from lupus). The high dosage of prednisone affected me physically and mentally. The weight gain, the head to toe scarring from the body rash, the emotional instability, losing my independence, and cutting off my beautiful dread locks drove me into a deep depression. I lost some acquaintances and made some unwise spontaneous choices due to my inability to rationalize and control my emotions/actions. [Read more...](#)



Put on Purple Day 2017 POP Day is an annual part of lupus awareness month where people wear purple and buildings and other landmarks are illuminated in purple light to help call attention to the impact of lupus.



What Is Black Music Month?

Black Music Month began in 1979 when Kenny Gamble, Ed Wright, and Dyana Williams developed the idea to set aside a month dedicated to celebrating the impact of black music. Created by music business insiders, the group successfully lobbied President Jimmy Carter to host a reception on June 7th, 1979 to formally recognize the cultural and financial contributions of black music. Since 1979, Black Music Month has grown from a small commemoration to national proportions with events held annually across the country.

In 2000, US-Representative Chaka Fattah sponsored House Resolution 509, which formally recognized the importance of Black music on culture and the economy during President Bill Clinton's administration. In 2009, President Barack Obama further defined June as African American Music Appreciation Month declaring the start of summer as a celebration for all the black "musicians, composers, singers, and songwriters [who] have made enormous contributions to our culture."

"The music of our Nation has always spoken to the condition of our people and reflected the diversity of our Union. African-American musicians, composers, singers, and songwriters have made enormous contributions to our culture by capturing the hardships and aspirations of a community and reminding us of our shared values."

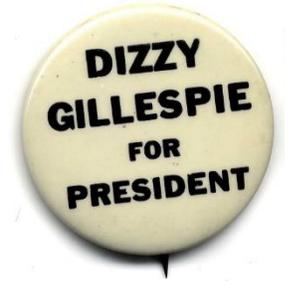
On May 31, 2016, President Barack Obama officially declared the month of June as African American Music Appreciation Month (AAMAM). For more information, visit his [*Presidential Proclamation of African American Music Month*](#).

Source: The National Museum of African American Music <http://nmaam.org/black-music-month/>



Dizzy Gillespie: Jazz & Latin Music

Written by Gracious Melody, Anita (Gillespie) Wallace



October 21st, 2016 marked the 99th birthday of my cousin & jazz pioneer **Dizzy Gillespie**. I'm excited about this year's celebrations for his 100th birthday. Dizzy was born in Cheraw, South Carolina in 1917 and on January 6, 1993 he died at the age of 75 from pancreatic cancer.

John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie began playing piano at age four. By the time he was 12, he taught himself to play trombone & trumpet. Dizzy's big breaks were playing with the Teddy Hill Orchestra & Cab Calloway's band which eventually led to Dizzy having his own big band.

The jazz style **BeBop** was created by Charlie Parker & Dizzy Gillespie.

Bebop had faster rhythms & different harmonies than big band or swing music. It also touched on Afro-Cuban rhythms.

Dizzy was instrumental in co-founding **Afro-Cuban Jazz** also known as **Latin Jazz**. The magical combination of the African & Latin music Dizzy created was often performed with Miriam Makeba, Chano Pozo, Machito, Tito Puente, Celia Cruz, Arturo Sandoval & Paquito D'Rivera. These electrifying performances have continued for years under the banner of "**Latin Jazz**" and "**Salsa Meets Jazz**" by many other artists. Aside from playing the trumpet, Dizzy also played Latin percussion.

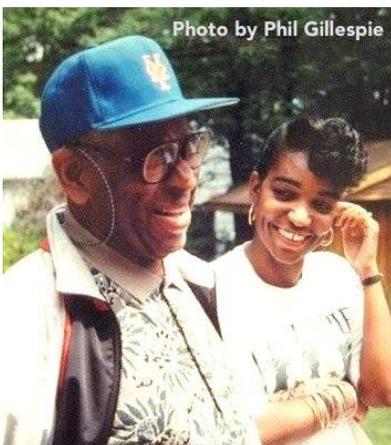
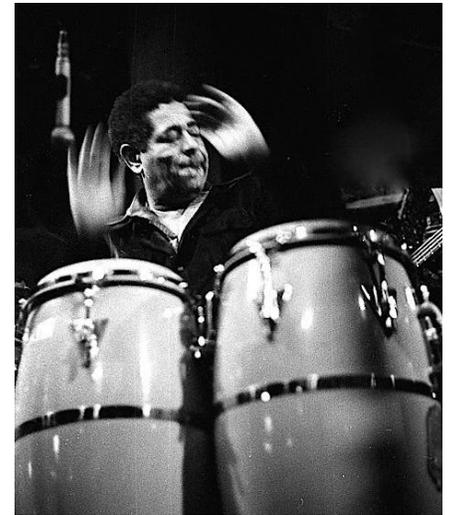
Dizzy's Legacy: There is a "Dizzy Gillespie Memorial Fund" at Englewood Hospital in New Jersey. The hospital pays for medical & surgical care for jazz musicians who do not have medical insurance. Since 1993 it has provided over 5 million dollars worth of medical services.

I am campaigning for a U.S. Postage Stamp to be created in Dizzy's honor. In 2015, I started an online petition through Change.org. Currently we have 1,217 signatures which surpassed our original goal of 1,000 signatures. Please sign the petition via:

<https://www.change.org/p/dizzy-gillespie-jazz-icon-deserves-a-u-s-postage-stamp>

In the near future, I will be creating a "Dizzy Gillespie Scholarship Fund" with my family.

There is SO MUCH MORE to be said about Dizzy's music, his accomplishments, influences, honorary degrees, civil rights involvement, unique performances and his crazy antics. Learn more about Dizzy when we celebrate his 100th birthday.



[Click here to read more on our website!](#)



[Click here](#) to listen to the *The Best of Dizzy Gillespie*



HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY

Hofstra Alumna and Author
Denene Millner Children's Book Discussion

Presenting
Early Sunday Morning

Saturday, April 22, 2017
11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

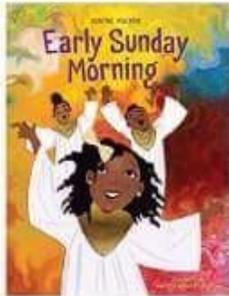


Hofstra University
Libby and Joseph G. Shapiro Alumni House
150 Hofstra University, Hempstead NY 11549
(516) 463-6636 or Email: alumni@hofstra.edu

\$7 per person to attend - Space is Limited
The cost of the book is \$19.50

Register online at: hofstra.edu/bhaabooks

Denene Millner will sign books purchased at discussion.



Love and family. These are the things that a little girl finds most special about Sunday mornings. *Early Sunday Morning* follows June, Mommy, Daddy, and brother Troy through their weekend routine as June prepares for a special performance leading the children's choir at church on Sunday morning.

Readers spend the weekend with June as she collects helpful pieces of advice on how to be less nervous about her big solo. As her special moment approaches, June leans on the support of her whole family, as well as advice from her father, to conquer her fear of singing in front of the congregation. *Early Sunday Morning* is a heartwarming

celebration of the special time a young girl and her family share together as she learns how to lift her mighty voice. *Early Sunday Morning* is the first offering from Denene Millner Books.

Spread the word and share these facts on your Facebook and Twitter.

May 1. Lupus is an unpredictable, chronic autoimmune disease that ravages different parts of the body.

May 2. In lupus, something goes wrong with the immune system, the part of the body that fights off viruses, bacteria, and germs. The result is the production of autoantibodies that cause inflammation.

May 3. Ninety percent of the people who develop lupus are women, though men can also develop lupus and their disease can affect some organs more severely.

May 4. Most often, lupus develops between ages 15 and 44. However, between 10 and 20 percent of cases develop during childhood and these cases can evolve into serious health complications more rapidly.

May 5. African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans are diagnosed with lupus two or three times more frequently than Caucasians; however, lupus affects people of all races and ethnicities.

May 6. Lupus is not contagious and cannot be "given" to another person.

May 7. To make a lupus diagnosis, doctors evaluate a patient's current symptoms, lab test results, personal medical history and family medical history.

May 8. Lupus can affect any organ system of the body, including the heart, kidneys, lungs, blood, joints and skin.

May 9. The malar, or "butterfly" rash on the face is present in an estimated one-third of people with lupus. This flat, reddish rash across the bridge of the nose and cheeks often is the only outward symptom of lupus (though other signs and symptoms might be present).

May 10. Though all pregnancies of women with lupus are considered "high risk", advancing technology and a better understanding of the disease have improved pregnancy outcomes. Today, 80 percent of women with lupus symptoms that are not active can have successful pregnancies. [Read more...](#)

BLACK
MUSIC
MONTH





MALIK MELODIES MAKE MAGIC ON MADHOUSE



By GM Dr. Nathalie C. Lilavois

Our most recent community partner, **DEE AVERY**, has given Malik Melodies a new presence on web TV! Dee Avery, the host of *Passion for Life with Dee & Friends* invited Dr. Nathalie C. Lilavois as a guest on her show on July 1, 2016 where she discussed her passion as an educator. Nathalie focused on making a positive difference in the lives of children. At Nathalie's suggestion, Dee asked GM Mary Richardson to share her insights as a health professional on the August 12th show. Mary also announced her latest endeavor, Get Fit & Be Healthy Walk and Health Fair, sponsored by Xtra Care Pharmacy in Freeport, NY to support the American Diabetes Association. GM Dr. Lisa Kirkland Sutherland guest starred on *Passion for Life* on September 23rd, 2016 where she focused on eye health in her profession as an optometrist. She explained the three "O"s- optician, optometrist, and ophthalmologist.

GM Kathleen D. Taylor & her daughter Raven joined Dr. Nathalie C. Lilavois to address incidents of school bullying for National Bullying Prevention Month. Terry Morris and her daughter also discussed their experiences with bullying. In December 2016, Dr. Nathalie joined Linda Fostek to discuss empowerment and self-confidence. Also in December, Dee welcomed friend/ singer/teacher/musician, Robbi Kumalo to share her passion about being in the "divine moment".

The shows were recorded on Fridays at 8pm at Madhouse TV in Deer Park, NY where they were streamed live online to a global audience via Ustream.TV. **Click on the pics below to watch each discussion.** *The shows are also available on the Madhouse TV channel on YouTube.*



Passion for Life with Dee & Friends

July 1, 2016 **Education** Dr. Nathalie C. Lilavois
<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/89085225>

Aug 12, 2016 **Health/American Diabetes Assn.**
Mary Richardson <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/90480254>

Sept 23, 2016 **Eye Health** Dr. Lisa Kirkland Sutherland
<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/91591942>

Oct 7, 2016 **Bullying Prevention** Dr. Nathalie C. Lilavois,
GM Kathleen D. Taylor & Raven Taylor
<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/92037319>

Dec 16, 2016 **Empowerment** Dr. Nathalie C. Lilavois
<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/94755058>

Dec 23, 2016 **Caregiving** Robbi Kumalo
<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/98283381>

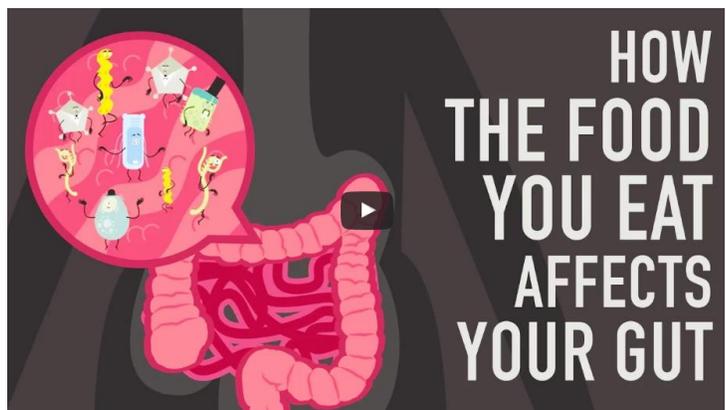
Passion for Life with Dee & Friends



HEALTH NOTES: How the food you eat affects your gut - Shilpa Ravella

The bacteria in our guts can break down food the body can't digest, produce important nutrients, regulate the immune system, and protect against harmful germs. And while we can't control all the factors that go into maintaining a healthy gut microbiome, we can manipulate the balance of our microbes by paying attention to what we eat.

Learn [how the food you eat affects your gut](#) with this [TED Ex](#) by gastroenterologist [Dr. Shilpa Ravella](#).



#MuseumsSoWhite: Black Pain and Why Painting Emmett Till Matters BY DR. LISA WHITTINGTON

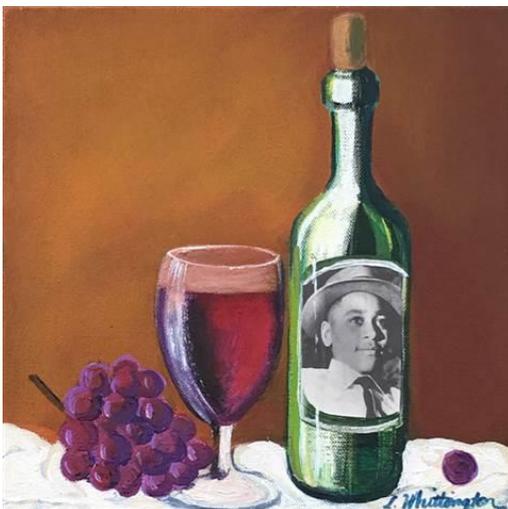
NBCBLK caught up with artist, educator, and speaker, [Dr. Lisa Whittington](#) to talk about artist intention, her own paintings of Emmett Till, and documenting black pain authentically. Gracious Melody Dr. Lisa Whittington is a TEDx Deer Park participant who presented the topic, "What Does Art Want With You?"

"How She Sent Him and How She Got Him Back" (2012) by Lisa Whittington



Courtesy Lisa Whittington

"Libation for Emmett Till" (2016) by Lisa Whittington



Courtesy Lisa Whittington

Can you go through your thought process behind your paintings of Emmett Till and what message you hoped to get across?

I was inspired to create my first painting of Emmett "How She Sent Him and How She Got Him Back" (2012) after I saw a picture of Mamie Till receiving the body of her son at an Illinois terminal after his murder. My painting, commemorate his life and memorializes his death. Mamie Till sent her son to Mississippi a bright cheerful boy, with big beautiful eyes, alive, and intact. How did she get him back? Tortured, dead, brutalized, naked, shot, eye gouged out, ear missing, unrecognizable.

I remember creating this work and getting angry, feeling emotional, sad, crying, and throwing my paintbrush across the room because it was such an ordeal. I had to imagine pieces of his experience to birth my artwork. Creating the picture was like having to watch him being brutalized and only being able to defend him with my paintbrush. It was frustrating to try to envision this nightmare in your mind and have to translate it to the canvas.

I thought about Emmett and spoke to him throughout the creation of my work.

What did they do to you Emmett? Why is your ear missing? Where are your clothes? Were you afraid? Were you lonely? Emmett, what did you think about while they were killing you? What did you see in their faces? In their eyes? What did they say to you? Were you already dead when they shot you? Were you numb when they gouged out your eye? Where were your clothes? Why were you naked Emmett? Did they rape you?

I felt sad that he had to experience this. We are supposed to make sure children are protected. Creating the painting is my way of letting him know I cared about his life and what happened to him and that I would not forget him and make sure people remember him as a young bright Black boy, who was kidnapped and died a gory death as punishment for speaking to a white woman. As a teacher, I see Emmett Till in my students every day and worry about their experiences in the world.

I also believed that if Mamie Till had the strength and the stamina to show the world what hatred did to her son, then as an African American, and a responsible artist is my duty to document what they did to her son through my artwork so the world won't forget.

Stirred by the events of Black Lives Matter, I created the second painting "Libation for Emmett Till" (2016). A libation is an African ritual that pours out a liquid offering in remembrance of those who have passed away, and is still practiced today by African American people who "pour out a little liquor and reminisce." I reminisce by painting narratives and scenes from my culture and history as an African American. [Read more...](#)



<https://nmaahc.si.edu/>



On March 18, 2017, MMSI sponsored a bus trip to National Museum of African American History & Culture in Washington, D.C.



"For the tale of how we suffer, and how we are delighted, and how we may triumph is never new, it always must be heard. There isn't any other tale to tell, it's the only light we've got in all this darkness." – James Baldwin (Sonny's Blues)

"I am where I am because of the bridges that I crossed. Sojourner Truth was a bridge. Harriet Tubman was a bridge. Ida B. Wells was a bridge. Madame C.J. Walker was a bridge. Fannie Lou Hamer was a bridge." -Oprah Winfrey

"For I am my mother's daughter and the drums of Africa still beat in my heart." – Mary McLeod Bethune

"These quotes sum up my feelings for the day I went to the National Museum of African American History and Culture with my MALIK family.... Such joy and pride seeing our lives unfolded.... The good, the bad, and the ugly... Just so much to see and experience. The bus ride was fun and all the movies were both informative and entertaining... not to mention, I won a little money from the raffle! We must do it again!"

~ Gracious Melody Doreen Riley



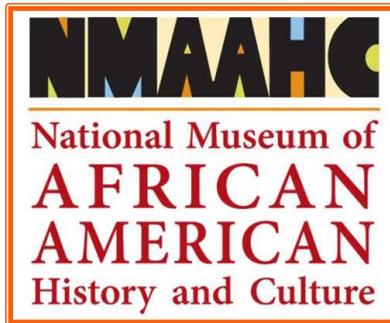
"This was a great experience and I am so honored to be a part of a people who have and always will endure greatness against all odds. You have to see it [the museum] more than once. But that is okay because it was well planned out and worth the wait."

~ Gracious Melody Rosita Timm



"The museum is excellent and will make you have intense emotions throughout your visit!! Glad I started at the top instead of the bottom because I would have been more angry and emotionally drained throughout my entire visit. Loved the interaction, discussions and memories shared with other people who were also visiting the museum."

~ Gracious Melody Mary Richardson



March 18, 2017 - I truly enjoyed sharing the day with my Malik Melodies Sisters, Malik Brothers and guests as we traveled from NY to the visit the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington DC. As we approached the museum and the sunlight reflected upon the bronze-colored lattice building, I became inspired and excited. I was about to share an experience with my peers while traveling through time learning more about myself and my history.

While visiting each level of the museum, I felt numerous emotions - sorrow and anger, especially viewing the slave ships - reflecting how my ancestors were taken from Africa and how they had endured the travel on the sea, only to be forced into slavery in America. The image of the young men and women sitting at the lunch counter was surreal as I was eating my lunch in the Sweet Café.

Another emotion that I experienced was pride as I viewed the displays of all the contributions Black America has made to America. Despite all the pain and suffering we had to endure, we were determined to make a change.

There are so many wonderful displays to see! I caught myself a few times saying "Oh my goodness! I remember this!" ...especially the display of the hot comb. I still have my great-grandmother's hot comb. When I was a little girl, I remembered getting my hair washed and straightened on Saturday afternoon so I could be ready for Sunday school the next morning (smiling fondly at this memory).

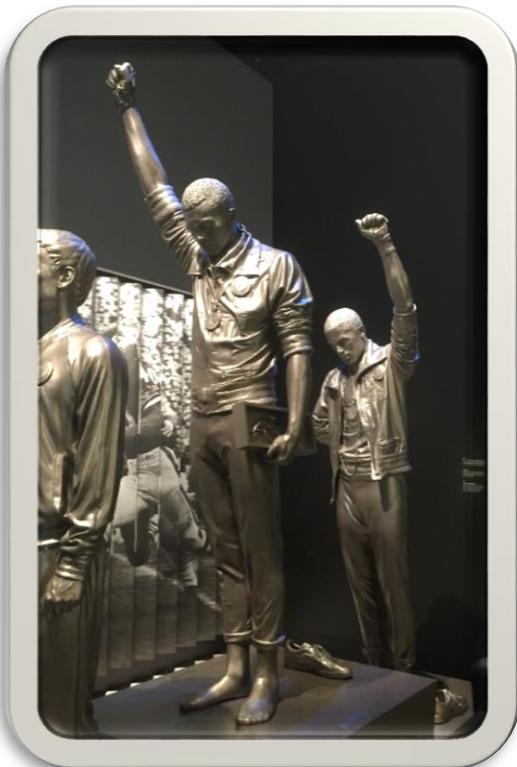
The National Museum of African American History and Culture is like a book with many chapters focusing on Black America's History. The displays allow all visitors from all ethnic backgrounds share the Black American experience which is- and always be- a very significant part of America's history.

~ Gracious Melody Sharon Harleston



What an amazing experience! Thank you again to the sisters of Malik Melodies for putting this trip together! Heading home with some new and old friends from seeing our history; truly humbling and so proud of us!

~ Dee Avery



**“The museum is a must see for everyone ... young, old, Black, White, Hispanic, Asian...Russian, etc... one hell of an issue eye opening experience! P.S. Take your family! We had a great time. P.P.S. Please take your walking shoes. “
~ Gracious Melody Claudette Edwards**

“Absolutely, enjoyed the trip with the Malik Melodies Sisterhood to the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC. Good time with Family...wish more Malik Brothers had come though... but Kenny Blackwell, Anthony Pitts and myself held it down...HIGHLIGHTS FOR ME...top floor is where you should start...to see stand near the Parliament "Mothership" and witness the number of people who approached and exclaimed, "THE MOTHERSHIP!" with awe, pride and joy and see the perplexed look of their kids was a treat! Third floor "Making a Way Out of No Way" exhibit was truly satisfying... funniest moment was standing afar from the Ben Carson display and hear folks look, shake their head, suck their teeth or say something negative about Uncle Ben, but no one spent time at his display. Now I know why he was the one that brought #45 to the museum.... yet it was great pride to see how many people stood near the Olympic display of the brothers with raised fist and took pictures with their fists raised too. If you get the chance... GO...MALIKS...the Melodies are going to do it again...don't miss it!"

~ Sir Crown Larry B. Martin

STUDENTS ON STRIKE

In 1951, fed up with poor conditions at the segregated Robert Russa Moton High School in Farmville, Virginia, a group of students led by 16-year-old Barbara Johns went on strike to demand a new school building. NAACP lawyers convinced the students to go to court to fight for desegregated schools rather than a new segregated one. Farmville became one of five legal cases included in the landmark 1954 U.S. Supreme Court ruling, *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Photo: "This is Your Moment: Salute 57" Former students, including strike leader Barbara Johns, display their photographs in the exhibit at Moton High School in Farmville, Virginia. Source from The National Archives and Records Administration. Reprinted with permission of the author.



"I am very proud of the fact that my sister and the other students took a stand and decided to do something about getting a new school. I am happy that the decision they made happened to be part of Brown v. Board of Education decision of 1954...So I guess you can say we all are a part of history." ~ Joan Johns Cobb [Read more...](#)

"Imagine walking slowly from exhibit to exhibit, trying to process the remarkable triumphs juxtaposed with the horrifying atrocities that make up the African American experience in America. Unexpectedly, there was a stir of excitement at a particular exhibit where two smiling women were pointing to the photograph of the students on strike in 1951. As I got closer, I realized they were pointing out their own faces in the group of students. These two women were living history! What an honor to speak to them and thank them for their courage.

The women dressed in red turned out to be **Joan Johns Cobb**, the younger sister of Barbara Rose John who, at 16 years old, had led the protest at Robert Russa Moton High School in Prince Edward County, Virginia.

This critical event became part of the [Brown v. Board of Education](#) decision. As an educator, meeting them was such an amazing experience that was just the icing on the cake of a wonderful trip!"

~ Gracious Melody Nathalie C. Lilavois



On May 17, 1954, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren delivered the unanimous ruling in the landmark civil rights case [Brown v. Board of Education](#) of Topeka, Kansas. State-sanctioned segregation of public schools was a violation of the 14th amendment and was therefore unconstitutional.



**"Kim,
Good afternoon.
Your presence was very much missed on the trip to the museum... The trip was fantastic and your sisters did you proud. Everyone in my group repeatedly commented on how welcomed they felt (and I couldn't agree more!). The black experience movies that were played on the bus (can I have the names of the films?) were great choices as well and definitely put everyone in the right frame of mind for the museum. The weather couldn't have been better (a little disappointed that the early Cherry blossoms were damaged by the frost though). Sharon had mentioned another possible museum trip in late spring or the summer. Please let me know if you do return and any other excursions your group may plan in the future. It was a pleasure that I look forward to repeating.
God bless, Ken "**

← Ken Jones (far left) and his guests pose in front of the museum.



2017 Walk to End Lupus Now, NYC WALK

Team Warlords Walk To End Lupus 2017

Saturday, May 6, 2017

Check-in: 8:30 a.m. | Walk: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
Seaport District 19 Fulton Street New York, NY 10036

Route: 3.1 miles

[DONATE NOW](#)

[JOIN TAWANIKKA'S TEAM!](#)

[Warlords Against Lupus](#)

Tawanikka Smith – Life with Lupus (continued from page 3)

At my lowest, this time gave me the opportunity to get back to my relationship with Him. I used to ask God, “Why me?” ...until, I heard Him respond, “Why not you?”

With that revelation and my new-found regard for lupus, I made up my mind to get out of the pit, and work through this like a warrior. Through networking with others battling lupus, I found a top rheumatologist, Dr. Kyriakos A. Kirou at Hospital for Special Surgery. I abhor the laundry list of medications (including chemotherapy) that I must take daily; however, I know the medications, along with the bi-annual immunotherapy infusions, are what keeps me afloat. Most important in the management of lupus is a controlled diet, exercise, and stress relief. Learning how to eat right by avoiding processed foods is the key to healthy living for life...period. Mild to moderate exercise helps me alleviate the muscle and joint issues. Avoiding stressful situations as much as possible is a challenge for most of us; however, my life is at stake so, I say, “Bye Felicia!” to the unnecessary stress. I try to get rest --even though that is as much of a challenge as avoiding stress-- so that my body can catch up with the daily battle of fighting lupus.

Yes! The fight against lupus is a daily battle! Every single day I’m on guard for a new attack on my body!

Even though it’s still hard to look at the scars from the ravage on my body from almost 2 years ago and my social life is almost non-existent, I’m grateful that I’m still here to fight and to educate others on this horrible disease. So many have lost their battle with lupus because they were misdiagnosed for so long or, like myself, were uneducated and did not treat it aggressively. With the new bill passed by the U.S. Senate appropriating over \$5,000,000 for lupus research, treatment and education, I pray that we will come closer to eradicating lupus. Thus, saving lives.

In the meantime, I fight!



**CONGRATULATIONS TO
GM LUAN PARKINSON-WELLS & SAMUEL WELLS
ON THE BIRTH OF THEIR BABY GIRL,
SANAA ANAYA HANNAH WELLS
ON MARCH 24, 2017!**



Melodies on the Move

Anita Denise Wallace



Gracious Melody Anita Denise (Gillespie) Wallace was born in Flushing, NY on May 8th, which makes her a Taurus, astrologically speaking. As such, her personality is defined by her charm, tact and self-determination. The May 8th Taurean is strong willed, motivated and disciplined; she is usually the one who organizes the social events because of her persuasive communication talents.

This enterprising spirit is clearly manifested in this high-powered Sister! Gracious Melody Anita Wallace has been a self-employed virtual assistant and events coordinator for 6-years. Her company, **CREATIVELY YOURS** offers a variety of services including:

- Creating, editing & proofreading spreadsheets, directories, presentations, invitations, press kits business plans, proposals, flyers, applications & forms
- Providing internet research & coordinating correspondence
- Handling ticket sales, social media pages, & press releases
- Complete event planning services



(Left) "Dimples" at Jones Beach; (Right) Anita with her babies, Brandie & Remy

Anita attended Long Island University, CW Post where she earned a bachelor's degree in Journalism. During her time at the Genesis Chapter, Anita became a Melody and was given the African name, **Amira Aswada** which means **Black Princess**. Currently, GM Anita serves as the secretary of the Executive Branch of MMSI. She also chairs the MMSI Health & Fitness Committee. As a breast cancer survivor, Anita a.k.a. "Dimples" has championed the Making Strides Breast Cancer Walk at Jones Beach, a place she loves.

Having worked over a decade in publishing and 16 years as an Executive Assistant, she is no stranger to writing, editing, creating documents and the importance of presentation skills. Anita is thorough, detailed and resourceful.

As a good researcher, she provides correct information and demonstrates flexibility working with a variety of personalities on multiple demands.

Anita also ventured into the real estate, medical risk management and entertainment industries. On the side, she enjoys making and selling handmade jewelry and party favors as well as providing candid photography services.

GM Anita provides a wide range of services including proofreading & editing, document creation, events planning, cold calls, database building, research projects, jewelry parties and creating custom jewelry pieces. Anita draws on her many years as an Executive Assistant and her publishing experience to focus primarily on document creation and proofreading.

Anita lives in Croton on Hudson, NY with her husband Kenneth. Her son Jordan is engaged & made her a grandma 2-years ago! Although Anita was recently hired as an administrative assistant at Mt. Sinai Medical Center, she's available for Virtual Assistant services, Events Planning & Jewelry Show parties.

DID YOU KNOW...

Anita's older cousin whom she called "Uncle John" is none other than famous virtuoso jazz trumpeter, bandleader & composer, **John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie**. He is known as one of the greatest jazz trumpeters of all time!

Contact information: dizjazz4@gmail.com or 914-671-4872.

Anita's favorite quotes: "Life is better when you're laughing" ~ Maya Angelou
"Don't talk about it, be about it" ~ Busta Rhymes