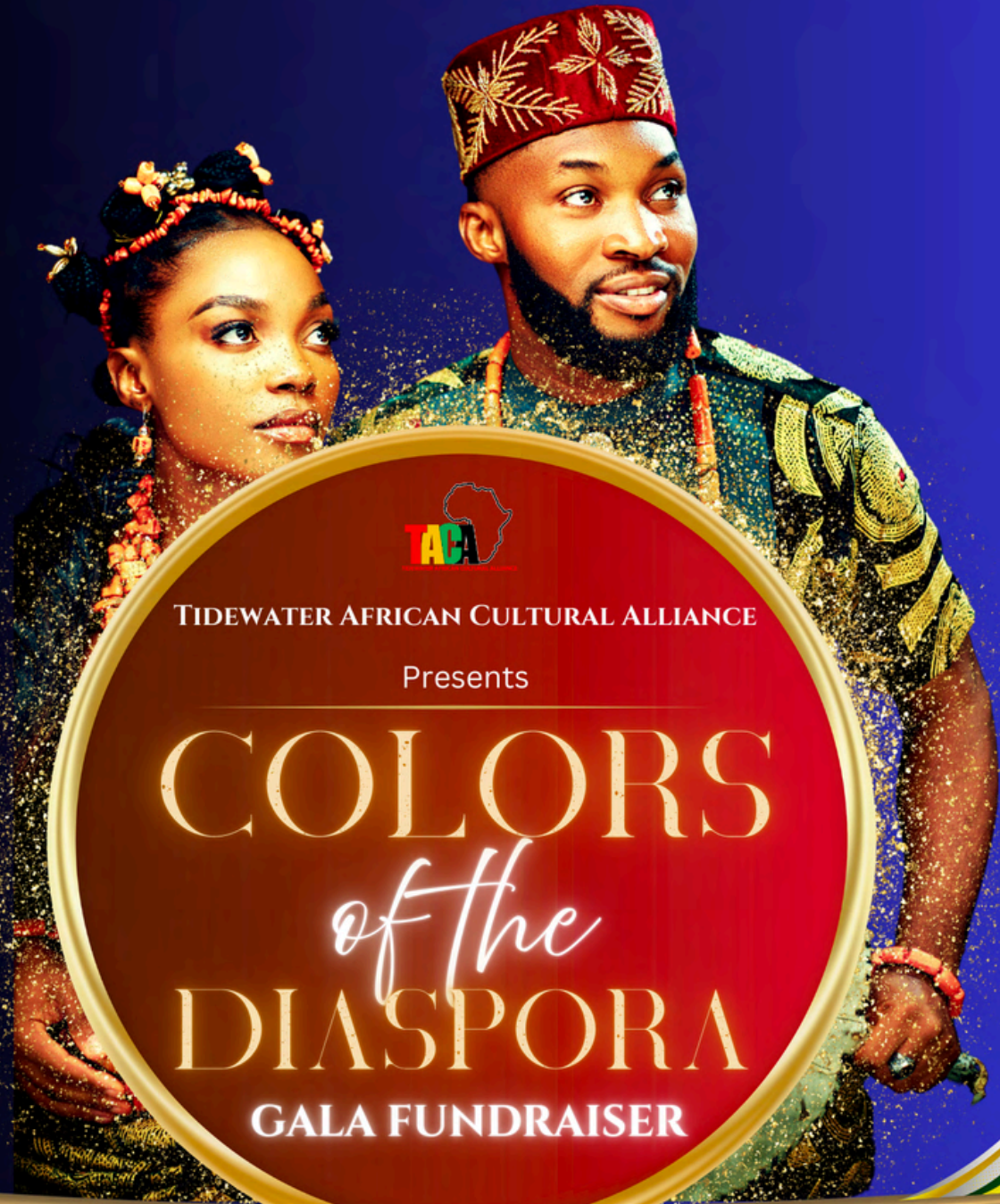


CELEBRATING 7 YEARS OF CULTURE & COMMUNITY



SUN 21 SEP 4-8 PM  
THE SLOVER: 235 E. PLUME ST. • NORFOLK, VA 23510  
[TACA757.ORG/GALA-1](http://TACA757.ORG/GALA-1)

VIRGINIAeye  
foundation

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**AHLAN BIK • AKWAABA • BEMVINDO • BIENVENU •  
INIKWANI DEHINA MET'AHİ • KARIBU • UKOMBE WEYA ...**

## **WELCOME**

**To the very first Colors of the Diaspora Gala & Fundraiser  
of the Tidewater African Cultural Alliance! We are thrilled  
to have your support in joining us to celebrate 7 years of  
culture and community.**

**AKIBA • AMASEGINALEHU • ASANTE • BARKA • DAALU •  
I NI CE • INGYABONGA • MERCI • MÈSI • OBRIGADO...**

## **THANK YOU**

**Guests, sponsors, and partners, for joining us for what  
promises to be an unforgettable evening!**





## **EVENT PROGRAM**

### **KICKOFF**

**Dance & Drumming Ensemble of the Tidewater African Cultural Alliance**

### **WELCOME**

**Rita Addico Cohen, Founder/Executive Director**

### **MASTERS OF CEREMONY**

**Udoka Obi & Dr. Moses Asamoah, Jr.,  
Chair & Vice Chair of the Board of Directors**

### **MINI CLASSICAL CONCERT**

**Rita Addico Cohen, Soprano**

**Jacyn Gibbs, Mezzo-Soprano**

**Terry Butler, Piano**

### **FASHION SHOW**

**Sonya Phillips, Designer**

**Models: Porlicia Brown, Jara Clark, Andrew Cohen, Rita Addico Cohen, Antwonnie Keys,  
Sam Lewis, Alicia Smithson-Edwards**

### **DINNER**

**Traditions & Co Catering**

### **GOSPEL AFROBEATS**

**Rosey MusiQ**

### **GOLDEN GOURD AWARDS PRESENTATION**

**Honorees, MC's, Rita Addico Cohen**

### **AFRO CARIBBEAN CONCERT**

**2Islands Band**

### **AUCTION WINNERS**

### **THANK YOU**



## ABOUT THE TIDEWATER AFRICAN CULTURAL ALLIANCE

The **Tidewater African Cultural Alliance (TACA)** strives to unite the greater Tidewater area through educational programs, cultural arts, and events. TACA moves to restore well-being and advance the status of Black people worldwide by addressing issues of equity and access in our global society. Our Vision is *Solidarity through the celebration of the African Diaspora worldwide*.

With weekly dance classes (resuming in October) and such events as the Afrobeats FEST 757, TACA promotes both traditional and contemporary African music, dance (classes/workshops), and other forms of African arts to the local community. Our Dance & Drumming Ensemble offers cultural dance and drumming performances, and is consistently booked throughout the year.

We are also intentional about dismantling the mental health stigma within our community, and incorporate *TACA Speaks* into our programs/events with a member of the African Diaspora sharing his/her mental health journey, in addition to monthly discussions on various topics to help break the stigma of mental health within the African diaspora community.

TACA is on the Teaching Roster of the *VA Commission for the Arts*. Our ACE (African Cultural Education) with TACA educational program exposes (mostly) youth and adults to the rich and diverse cultures of Africa, helping to break down stereotypes and misconceptions, all the while enjoying Dance, Music, and folk tales. Our annual Afro MANIA event focuses on one African country and culture, to expose the community to that culture, and bring those from that country in our community together through the arts, as well as culture/history. We have featured Kenya, Angola, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Haiti, and Ghana most recently (in collaboration with the Tema Committee of the Norfolk Sister City Association, with an Advancing Arts Equity grant from the City of Norfolk to be able to have it at the historic Attucks Theatre in March 2025).

In its 7 years of existence as a 501 c3 nonprofit organization, the Tidewater African Cultural Alliance has partnered with numerous organizations, schools, and cities, such as ForKids, Boys & Girls Club of SEVA, Communities In Schools of Hampton Roads, City of Virginia Beach, Norfolk Arts, Alexandria Library, ODU Center for Bioelectronics, and NSU Dance Theatre, to bring quality programs and services to the Hampton Roads, RVA, and NOVA community.







## WHY COLORS OF THE DIASPORA?

As an organization, we have known for quite some time that we would be offering our community an elegant event. In keeping with our Vision of ***Solidarity through the celebration of the African Diaspora worldwide***, we knew that the event would celebrate all of the members of the African diaspora, rather than focusing on a single country.

African descended people are known for their color - whether in the various beautiful textiles and fashions, visual and performing arts, languages, or food. We wanted an event that would highlight all of that and instill cultural pride, while displaying all the colors of the African diaspora.



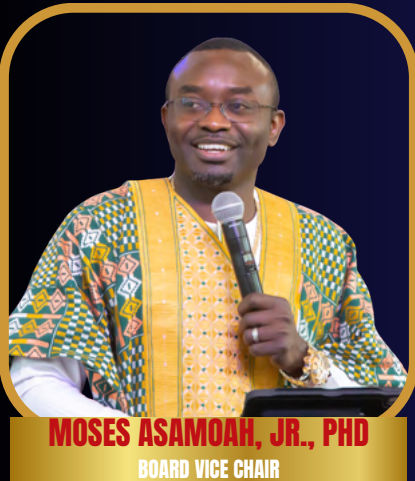


## MEET OUR MC's

**Dr. Moses Selorm Asamoah, Jr.** is the Founder and Lead Pastor of **Living Destiny Church**. Originally from Ghana, he and his wife Delali have been married for 16 years and are blessed with three daughters.

Pastor Moses is a graduate of Regent University, where he earned both a Master of Divinity and a Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership degrees; and received his Doctorate from Fuller Theological Seminary . He is the President of Selorm Ministries, Int. and the Blackwell Institute of Leadership and Coaching.

Dr. Asamoah is passionate for the Word of God, Prayer, Leadership Development and Church Planting. He is also the published author of *Sweetly Broken: Understanding the Pathway to Your Divine Assignment*, *Thank God for Goliath: Turning a Death Sentence into a Victory Parade*, and three motivational CDs in the African Folktale Series.



**MOSES ASAMOAH, JR., PHD**  
BOARD VICE CHAIR

Immigration Attorney **Udoka Obi** earned her BA from the University of Virginia in 2003, then her JD from Regent University, in 2007. She is proud to serve the Hampton Roads community with her Law Office of Udoka Obi, P.L.L.C in Newport News.

As past President of the Nigerian Women's Association, Ms. Obi is brings her leadership and legal skills to help strengthen the Tidewater African Cultural Alliance organization to make a lasting impact in our community.



**UDOKA OBI**  
BOARD CHAIR







## DINNER MENU

SOUP: CACHUPA (Cape Verde) ✓GP

JAMAICAN CABBAGE ✓GP

JOLLOF RICE ✓GP

FRIED SWEET PLANTAINS ✓GP

DINNER ROLLS P

JERK CHICKEN GP

OXTAIL GP

## BEVERAGES

WATER • ICED TEA • LEMONADE • OPEN BAR (Liquaide)

## DESSERT

MILK CHOCOLATE FROM GHANA GF

✓ = Vegan • G = Gluten Free • P = Peanut Free





## MEET OUR ARTISTS



Accra, Ghana native **Rita Addico Cohen** has been singing and dancing for as long as she can remember. She attended the University of VA on a full academic scholarship as an Achievement and Echols Scholar, graduating with a BA in Classical Music. She received her Master of Music in Classical Voice Performance from the Manhattan School of Music.

After singing professionally from NY through Texas (including premiering the role of Dessi in *Strange Fruit* with Longleaf Opera; being a Vocal Fellow of the John Duffy Composers Institute of the *Virginia Arts Festival*; touring in the title role of *Treemonisha* with Paragon Ragtime Orchestra; touring as a young artist with Virginia Opera), she paused her vocal career to focus on her two children. Rita is looking forward to adding her unusually high (coloratura) soprano voice to our area's musical tapestry again.



Norfolk, Virginia native **Terry Butler** received his undergraduate and graduate degrees in Music Education, and Organ Performance from Norfolk State University. He currently serves as the Assistant Director of Choral Activities and Music Professor within that post.

He is a proficient musician who enjoys playing the piano and organ, as well as producing and arranging in a variety of music genres. He travels to many churches and schools as an accompanist, adjudicator, and clinician. His love for music has no boundaries, as he searches for more ways to continue sharing his gifts with all in and around his circle of education and the arts.

Mr. Butler is also the co-owner of Dance Dimensions Academy of Dance and Music located in Norfolk, VA.







## MEET OUR ARTISTS

**Jacyn Gibbs** discovered her passion for opera at the age of 15, when she encountered the artistry of Denyce Graves at her local library. Inspired by this legacy, she has pursued a career as a professional opera singer, distinguished by her rich voice and expressive artistry.

She holds a Master of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of Southern Mississippi and an Educational Specialist degree from Regent University. Jacyn has earned recognition in several vocal competitions and appeared as a featured soloist on the Millennium Stage at the John F. Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

Her performance career spans both the USA and abroad, with appearances in venues such as San Diego, California, and Todi, Italy, where she studied with internationally acclaimed baritone Bruno Taddia. In May 2023, she recorded a music video of My Country, 'Tis of Thee and premiered New Canaan: A New American Anthem at Christ and Saint Luke's Episcopal Cathedral in Norfolk, Virginia. Dedicated to sharing the transformative power of opera, Jacyn continues to bring her voice to audiences with passion and purpose.



**JACYN GIBBS**  
MEZZO-SOPRANO

**Rosey** came to the US after completing high school in her native Takoradi, Ghana. In her childhood neighborhood church ICGC, she played the role of the youth praise, worship, and choir leader. Through her challenging upbringing in Ghana, Rosey and her sisters always stood strong in God and His promises of never leaving nor forsaking us.

She began writing songs at the age of 14, and recorded her first album *Genesis*, in 2018. Her subsequent projects have mostly been singles, with some featuring such award-winning artists as Carl Clotney, Obenewa, Joyce Blessings, and Navah.

Based in Richmond, VA, she has since performed and ministered the gospel of Jesus across many platforms. Rosey is the 2025 Ghana USA Music Awards Female Artist of the Year.



**ROSEY MUSIQ**  
AFROBEATS GOSPEL SINGING ARTIST





## MEET OUR ARTISTS



**Sonya Z. Phillips** is an international fashion designer with over 30 years of experience, specializing in sustainable fashion and couture design. As the founder of Stretch Couture and Sustainabili-T, she has not only created stunning garments but also coached aspiring fashion designers and taught sewing skills to hundreds of students worldwide. [She is wearing a slit and kaba that she made herself in the photo.]

Sonya started as a self-taught seamstress, but has since studied Couture Fashion Design under the renowned designer Marc Jacobs, and has showcased her work at prestigious events like New York Fashion Week. She is also the founder of the Volo Fashion Show and Competition, held annually in Ghana.

In addition to her fashion expertise, Sonya is the Co-Owner of Dream Shape Body Contouring Med Spa, helping clients achieve their wellness goals through non-invasive body contouring techniques. She also serves as the Executive Aide to Torgbe Volo Yingor 1st, the Economic Development Chief of Volo, Ghana, where she contributes to economic initiatives around sustainability and cultural projects.



Since its May 2022 début, the **Tidewater African Cultural Alliance Dance & Drumming Ensemble** has been adding authentic African cultural dance to events all over the Hampton Roads/Tidewater region. Known for its versatility in offering both cultural (traditional) and contemporary (Afrobeats) dance styles, they are in demand for their unique performances, full of energetic moves and vibrant costumes, that will make your heart and soul smile.

The dancers and drummers hail from Africa and the diaspora, bringing their diverse cultures and traditions with them to create a true African Diaspora cultural experience with every performance.





## MEET OUR ARTISTS

**2 Islands** was founded by best friends, Don Liebell (pianist, arranger, and composer) and Yuri Salina (lead singer/entertainer). Yuri and Don bonded over their shared passions for music to form their band. Just a few years ago, it started simply as a duo with Don at the piano and Yuri on vocals. It rapidly expanded to become a highly demanded, one-of-a-kind family-based band.

Don and Yuri are proud to feature the exquisite vocal talents of Yuri's wife, Janine Salina and their daughter, Tristen Salina. Their younger daughter, Thais Salina is 2 Islands' teenage bass guitar sensation. Daron Roberts, also from Trinidad is an exquisite talent on percussion.

David Speckhart, from Virginia Beach is 2 Islands' outrageously skilled lead guitarist. Elijah Wheeler provides spectacularly uplifting and authentic Caribbean vibes on the steel pan, the native instrument of Trinidad. Josh Sierra Delgado adds exquisite cello and Spanish vocals and salsa magic to our mix. Manager, Sheila Liebell ("Sheila Shine"), Don's wife, complete the 2 Islands package. Each member brings unique talents to this music entertainment group.



**2ISLANDS**  
BAND



**ELIJAH WHEELER**  
STEEL PAN

Born and raised in Virginia Beach, **Elijah Wheeler** is a pannist who shares the beautiful sound of steel pan across the Hampton Roads area. Incorporating soca, reggae, pop, and other genres, he brings the joy and vibrance of the instrument to life, leaving audiences with an unforgettable experience.





## TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS FOR CLASSICAL RECITAL

### Bonwerɛ Kenterɔwene

[Traditional Akan Song, Arranged by Ephraim Amu]

Akyinkyinakyinkyin ama mahu nneɛma,  
Akyinkyinakyinkyin ama mate nseɛma,  
Asante Bonwirɛ Kenterɔwene deɛ,  
Manhu bi da o,  
Asante Bonwirɛ Kenterɔwene deɛ,  
Mante bi da o,  
Kwame onim adeɛ yɛ  
Ne Kenterɔwene na abɔ me gye  
Ne nsa; ne nan, n'asadua sɔ gye gye ani:  
Kro, kro, krohikro,  
Hi, hi, hi, hi,  
Krohikro hi krokrokro,  
Hi, hi, hi, hi,  
Krohikro,  
Na ɛyɛ me dɛ o,  
A ɛyɛ me dɛ o,  
Bonwerɛ Kenterɔwene noa,  
A yɛ me dɛ o, a bo me gye

### Bonwire Kente Weaving

[Twi Translated by Rita Addico Cohen]

I've seen many things through my travels.  
I've heard of many things through my travels,  
But Ashanti Bonwire Kente weaving,  
I've never seen it.  
Ashanti Bonwire Kente weaving,  
I've never heard of it.  
Kwame knows what he's doing.  
His Kente weaving has delighted me.  
His hand, his arm, his foot delight me.  
Kro, kro, krohikro [weaving loom sounds]  
Hi, hi, hi, hi,  
Krohikro hi krokrokro,  
Hi, hi, hi, hi,  
Krohikro,  
That delights me.  
It delights me.  
The Bonwire Kente weaving  
Has delighted me, has made me happy.

### Esato

Based on Traditional Igbo Melody of Nigeria  
Composed by Fred Onowwerosuoke

Ogini chataro ne lu?  
Oto esato,  
Ei ye ghe, ye ghe  
Oto characha!  
Ogini nu na kpotu no?  
Obia no chato ko  
Chato ko, biko'e  
Oto characha!

### Eight

Based on Traditional Igbo Melody of Nigeria

Are these ripe fruits I see?  
Eight of them  
Ooh, juicy ripe  
Almost too ripe!  
What stops us from plucking?  
Then comes this one,  
This one, please.  
Almost too ripe!



## TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS FOR CLASSICAL RECITAL

### ɔsagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah

by Benedict A. Sackey

ɔsagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah ee!  
You were a leader par excellence,  
A visionary, a unifier, a thinker,  
A big dreamer!  
Your words are still relevant and meaningful  
To Africans in this modern era.  
Sankɔfa, ebibiman ee  
Yɛbesan akefa  
Kwame Nkrumah ne tsir mu pɔw w'ebibiman ho,  
Na yeenya f'ahodzi o, f'ahodzi trodoo,  
Na mpontu koraa.  
ɔsagyefo, ɔsagyefo, ɔsagyefo  
Dr. Kwame Nkrumah ee!  
Ghana nye ebibiman maw'mbo, mbo, mbo o.

### Saviour Dr. Kwame Nkrumah

[Fante Translated by Rita Addico Cohen & Solomon Addico]

Oh Saviour Dr. Kwame Nkrumah!  
You were a leader par excellence,  
A visionary, a unifier, a thinker,  
A big dreamer!  
Your words are still relevant and meaningful  
To Africans in this modern era.  
Return and fetch it, Black Africa [wow]!  
We will fetch it again  
Kwame Nkrumah's strong mindset for Black  
Africa's wellbeing has enabled us  
To gain our freedom  
Oh Saviour, Saviour, Saviour  
Dr. Kwame Nkrumah!  
Ghana and Black Africa express our sincerest  
gratitude.

### A Charm at Parting

Text by Mary Phelps

By Adolphus Hailstork (Virginia Beach Composer)

In well cooled hollow walk your way,  
In bee soft bower sleep you  
In drift,  
In dream,  
Drink fresh,  
Breathe free  
In home,  
Love keep you



## TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS FOR CLASSICAL RECITAL

### Status Symbol

Text by Mari Evans

Composed by David N. Baker

i  
Have Arrived  
i  
am the  
New Negro  
i  
am the result of  
President Lincoln  
World War I  
and Paris  
the  
Red Ball Express  
white drinking fountains  
sitdowns and  
sit-ins  
Federal Troops  
Marches on Washington  
And  
prayer meetings  
today  
They hired me  
it  
is a status  
job . . .  
along  
with my papers  
They  
gave me my  
Status Symbol  
the  
key  
to the  
White . . . Locked . . .  
John





## MEET OUR GOLDEN GOURD AWARDS HONOREES



**Emmanuel Ambané** is an African catalyst who creates platforms to mobilize and empower African students and faculty at institutions including Old Dominion University, Norfolk State University, the College of William & Mary, James Madison University, the University of Virginia, Virginia Tech, Duke University, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina State University, and North Carolina Central University.

He is an author and global speaker with InterVarsity USA. A former international soccer player with the Cameroonian U-17 and U-20 teams, and an All-American at Old Dominion University, Emmanuel's greatest passion lies in empowering Africans to tell their own stories.

Emmanuel has been married to Allison for ten years, and they have three children: Camilla, Soleil, and Béni.



Pastor **Mary A. Banks** is a dynamic speaker who is recognized for her ability to inspire transformative change. Her life's mission is to help individuals bridge the gap between their current circumstances and their divine purpose, guiding them to become the best version of themselves. She is the founder of the Abundance Women Conference (AWC), an annual gathering that empowers women to embrace their God-given purpose and unlock their full potential.

Alongside her husband, Rev. Dr. Peter Banks, she has faithfully served as a pastor in churches throughout Europe, her native Ghana, and the United States. Deeply committed to advancing mental wellness within the Christian community, Pastor Mary co-founded Faith and Mental Health Integrated, Inc. (FMHI), a nonprofit organization dedicated to navigating the intersection of faith and mental wellness. She currently leads the organization as its President.

In addition to her pastoral ministry, Mary brings over 15 years of experience in higher education, having held significant roles in both Academic and Student Affairs. She presently serves as Director within the Student Affairs Division at Norfolk State University.





## MEET OUR GOLDEN GOURD AWARDS HONOREES



**Joe L. Harmon, III** is a Portsmouth, Virginia based distinguished music educator, arts administrator, and civic leader. He is currently the Coordinator of Secondary Performing Arts for Portsmouth Public Schools, where he champions equitable access to high-quality arts education and oversees curriculum development, community partnerships, and performance programming across the division. With over a decade of experience, Mr. Harmon has been instrumental in transforming student experiences in choral music through innovation, collaboration, and cultural relevance.

He formerly served as the Director of Choral Activities at I.C. Norcom High School, where he built vibrant, student-centered ensembles known for excellence in performance and community engagement. His tenure has included collaborations with the Virginia Symphony

Orchestra as the host location for the Young People's Concerts, adjudication at regional and state festivals, and the launch of meaningful outreach initiatives, such as community caroling and interscholastic musical partnerships. He previously served as Director of Choral Activities at Cradock Middle School, where he strengthened vertical alignment through feeder pattern recruitment and artistic rigor.

From 2021 to 2024, he served as Performing Arts Chairman and Zone Liaison for Portsmouth Public Schools. A committed community servant, Mr. Harmon brings his leadership to numerous civic boards: the Portsmouth Economic Development Authority; on the Virginia Symphony Orchestra Board, where he acts as liaison to the City of Portsmouth, VA Government; and as Chairman of the Portsmouth Parks and Recreation Commission.

Beyond the public sector, Mr. Harmon has made a significant impact in the faith community. He has served as Minister of Music at Pleasant Valley Baptist Church since 2013. He also worked as a Music & Media Consultant for St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church.

Mr. Harmon earned his Bachelor of Arts in Music Education from Norfolk State University and a Master of Arts in Music Education with a concentration in Conducting from Old Dominion University. He is a member of numerous professional and service organizations, including the Virginia Music Educators Association, Virginia Choral Directors Association, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, and JCI USA, . A respected clinician, adjudicator, and conductor, Joe Harmon is a passionate advocate for student empowerment through the performing arts, driven by the belief that music is a powerful vehicle for academic achievement, cultural understanding, and civic pride.





## MEET OUR GOLDEN GOURD AWARDS HONOREES



Burkina Faso native **Dr. Kouliga Koala, PhD**, is the Founder and Managing Director of Panga Institutions LLC, USA. He is an IRS Enrolled Agent, specializing in tax law, including filing tax returns for individuals and businesses, providing advice, and representing clients before the IRS for tax resolution issues.

His company hosts conferences and training sessions to empower and inspire entrepreneurship within the diaspora community and beyond. In addition to his role at Panga Institutions, Dr. Koala began his college education in his native Burkina Faso, and holds a PhD in Public Administration & Policy, and teaches graduate courses in Public Procurement and Contract Management at Old Dominion University.

Since 2021, he played a key role in helping a Virginia telecommunications company secure several state and federal grants, including a \$15 Million grant for broadband expansion in rural Virginia. He is also a proud recipient of the prestigious Fulbright program.

Dr. Koala is also the author of a book aimed at helping the African diaspora successfully invest in their home countries. His ultimate goal is to help build thriving communities by promoting entrepreneurship and financial stability in both the United States and beyond.







## MEET OUR GOLDEN GOURD AWARDS HONOREES



**DEIRDRE LOVE**  
YOUTH ADVOCATE

Over three decades, **Deirdre Love** has poured herself into her community. From Harlem to Virginia Beach, she has shared knowledge and resources, cultivated relationships and guided young people to tap into the best version of themselves through creative expression. Deirdre learned the importance of strong and supportive adult role models at an early age. She was raised in Harlem by a single, widowed mother alongside seven siblings during a time riddled with sociocultural and economic challenges. Short in stature and large in generosity and grit, Deirdre's mom showed her that anything was possible. So, too, did Sister Bridget Ann encourage Deirdre to see her value, power and purpose despite life's challenges.

These women, Deirdre says, planted the first seeds that would eventually bloom into a career in youth mentorship. When her cousin and best friend was diagnosed with and eventually lost his battle with HIV/AIDS, Deirdre became steadfast in caring for those in marginalized communities. Moved to help young people with HIV prevention, Deirdre set out to inspire, help and protect others like her beloved Stephen through a youth ministry at the Basilica of St. Mary's, establishing Teens With A Purpose in 1996. Since then, Deirdre has been on a mission to empower teens.

In 2007, Teens With a Purpose became TWP-The Youth Movement, a 501c (3) nonprofit organization centered on youth development. Encouraged by one of her longest friends and now Board member – the one and only Al Roker of Today Show fame – Deirdre poured herself full-time into her nonprofit work. Under Deirdre's leadership, TWP has become an impressive arts-centered platform that empowers young people to use their voice, creativity, reflection and action to affect personal growth, transform lives and impact communities. In addition to a wide range of year-round programming, TWP provides the region's only gateway to the National Youth Poet Laureate Program. Deirdre credits the organization's impact to her own mentors, who have included her son Andre, as well as the mentees and young colleagues to whom she's simply "Momma D."





## MEET OUR GOLDEN GOURD AWARDS HONOREES



**Dr. Constance Okeke** is a US board-certified ophthalmologist who is committed to educating her patients and the community about how to fight glaucoma blindness. She received her undergraduate and medical degree from Yale University, trained in ophthalmology at the Wilmer Eye Institute of Johns Hopkins University. She completed her glaucoma fellowship training at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute of University of Miami, and then went on to earn a Masters of Science in Clinical Epidemiology (MSCE) at University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Okeke has practiced ophthalmology with a specialty in glaucoma and cataract surgery for more 20 years. Currently, she is an Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology at Eastern Virginia Medical School and the lead glaucoma specialist at ECP - Virginia Eye Consultants in Norfolk, Virginia. Dr. Okeke is a nationally recognized ophthalmologist and educator. In addition to teaching, she is on the editorial advisory board of Glaucoma Today, EyeWorld, and the Glaucoma Physician journals.

Professor Okeke also has educational YouTube channels that feature glaucoma surgical techniques: iGlaucoma (for eye care professionals) and iGlaucoma Patient (for patient education and support). As part of her effort to educate patients, she wrote The Glaucoma Guidebook: Expert Advice on Maintaining Healthy Vision. It is a best selling, multi-award winning Johns Hopkins Health Book, that is now recently available as an audio book, narrated by Dr Okeke.

Among her many awards, Dr. Okeke was voted to The Ophthalmologist's Power List 2021 Top 100 Females and Power List 2022 Top 100. She was recognized as a Castle Connolly Top Doc 2021-2025, received the Castle Connolly Exceptional Women in Medicine Award in 2022-2025 and the Castle Connolly Top Black Doctor Award in 2023 . She was also selected at a VA Top Doc in 2022 - 2025. Dr. Okeke makes her home in Hampton Roads, Virginia, with her loving husband and three children.





## MEET OUR GOLDEN GOURD AWARDS HONOREES



**The Honorable Dr. Amelia Ross-Hammond** is a re-elected Council member of District 4 for the City of Virginia Beach. She has a PH.D. in Education Leadership, Curriculum, and Instructions with a Minor in Ethnomusicology from the University of Denver and is a graduate of the Sorenson Institute for Political Leadership, from the University of Virginia.

Dr. Ross-Hammond retired from Norfolk State University as Distinguished Professor Emerita and Director of Service-Learning and Civic Engagement. She is the Vice President of the Virginia Transit Association, Past Chair of the Hampton Roads Transit Commission and Board member of the Virginia Municipal League. She received several gubernatorial appointments and in December 2024, received an appointment to the State Executive Council for Children Services from Governor Glenn Youngkin. She is also liaison to several city boards.

Dr. Ross-Hammond is the Founder & Chairman of the Virginia African American Cultural Center (VAACC). Under her leadership and vision, the City Council of Virginia Beach unanimously gifted 4.83 acres of land to build the VAACC. Its Board implements cultural, historic and art enrichment programmatic activities within the community, City Public Schools, universities, and Hampton Roads. Her accomplishments include a collaboration with the VA Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) to publish the City's 1st Self-Guided Tour brochure of African American History in Virginia Beach.

The VAACC also received a grant from the Virginia Tourism Corporation of \$1 million to expand its programs, historical and cultural research, and additional funds of \$100,000 in partnership with VisitNorfolk to complete the Hampton Roads Heritage Trail Guide from the General Assembly, and \$105,000 to refurbish the Basketball courts on its site by the NBA in partnership with the SOMETHING IN THE WATER to enhance the community's recreational and educational activities.

A community leader, Dr. Ross-Hammond is a member of several local and regional Board and a recipient of many prestigious awards, including the 2023 Women in Business award, the 1st NASA STEM Employee of the Year award in honor of Sonic Boon pioneer Carol Darden; a 2024 U.N.C.F Mayors' MASKED Ball Honoree; the "Impacting Lives Award" a "Letter of Commendation" read during session at the U.S. Capitol by former Congresswoman Elaine Luria. and on December 20, 2024, she received the Wesley Award from Virginia Wesleyan University.







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**VIRGINIA**eye  
foundation

CARNIVAL CHAMPION

**West Hoffman**  
— WEALTH MANAGEMENT —  
*of*  
**RAYMOND JAMES**





**SPONSOR**

# **VIRGINIA**eye foundation

Dedicated to the prevention of blindness in Virginia.

## **Overview**

The Virginia Eye Foundation raises funds to support medical and surgical care, education and accessibility of eye care and blindness prevention in Virginia. VEF funds sight saving surgeries and care for those without the ability to pay or without insurance. VEF also provides scholarships to high school seniors interested in pursuing a career in the visual sciences as well as grants to free clinics and organizations providing eye care services.

## **Community Education**

Virginia Eye Foundation supports continuing education of local health care professionals. Several workshops and seminars are offered throughout the year focusing on a variety of eye care topics, including new technology and procedures.

## **Contact Us**

<https://virginiaeyefoundation.org>

[mfall@cvphealth.com](mailto:mfall@cvphealth.com)





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COMMUNITY FRIEND

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## VENDOR



## Introducing.....



Agu, the newest children's book by Dr. Ngozi M. Obi, is a reimagined tale of Umuezechime heritage for children ages 9 & up and aims to pique interest in history. Agu can be purchased everywhere books are sold online. It can also be ordered/requested from local brick and mortar bookstores. Scan the QR code to purchase on Amazon.

Dr. Ngozi M. Obi is an American author of Nigerian Igbo descent whose love for writing has evolved into three novels (*Love's Destiny*, 2009; *When Dreams and Visions Collide*, 2010 and *Love's Legacy*, 2016.), A historical fiction novel (*Land of the Rising Sun: A Fictional Tribute to Biafra*, 2017; audiobook, 2021.), A nonfiction collaboration co-authored with thirty other women (*The Women of Purpose Anthology*, 2018.) and three children's books (*Timmy's Time Tale*, 2020; *Shades of Me*, 2020 and *Agu*, 2025.) to date. She also practices as a pharmacist in the love-filled state of Virginia where she resides. In her spare time, when she is not busy writing books, she enjoys frequent spa escapes, traveling, cooking and historical facts research.

Visit [www.ladsofdestiny.com](http://www.ladsofdestiny.com) for more information about Dr. Obi and her books.





VENDOR



**RISE**  
**INSTITUTE**





## AUCTION DONORS

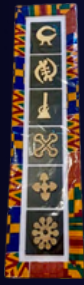


GHANA CENTRE FOR NATIONAL CULTURE



GREATER ACCRA REGION





## AUCTION ITEMS

**1. TACA Dance & Drumming Ensemble Interactive Performance**

**2. TACA Dance & Drumming Ensemble Performance**

**3. Fusion Mélange Private Dinner for 4 Gift Certificate**

**4. 1 Hour West African Drumming Lesson**

**5. Dancing Daughters of the Diaspora Framed Acrylic Painting**

**6. Fusion Mélange Private Dinner for 2 Gift Certificate**

**7. Mbô Mô Mvet Sculpture from Gabon**

**8. Raffia Rowers Sculpture from Gabon**

**9. DanzStar Gift Basket**

**10. Ngui Mask from Gabon**

**11. Raffia Water Carrier from Gabon**

**12. Fabric of Africa Painting on Canvas from Ghana Centre for National Culture**

**13. TACA Lover Beaded Bracelet**

**14. Unity Bowl from Ghana Centre for National Culture**

**15. TACA Lover Beaded Bracelet**

**16. Adinkra Symbols & Kente Art from Ghana Centre for National Culture**

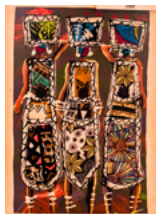
**17. Masked Warriors Couple from Ghana Centre for National Culture**

**18. 3 Ankara Fabric Women on Canvas from Ghana Centre for National Culture**

**19. Ebony Male & Female Silhouettes from Ghana Centre for National Culture**

**20. Greetings from Africa Wooden Carving from Ghana Centre for National Culture**

**21. 2 Tickets to Soweto Gospel Choir Concert at the Ferguson Center in Newport News**







# TACA 2018-2025





## THANK YOU

If you:

- Bought a ticket
- Donated your time and skills (Event Committee Members Lisette Rice, Kathy Stokes, and Valerie Winborne; our Dance & Drum Ensemble Members Alayah Shannon, Alicia Smithson-Edwards, Alyssa Eaton, Antwonne Keys, Dmitri Clawson, Felix Valderrama, Jara Clark, Nana Yaw Aino, Porlicia Brown, Ricky Micou, and Sam Lewis; and Volunteers Magdalene Bongah, Linda Moise, and Blair Murry-Webb)
- Are a Board Member
- Are a Sponsor
- Are a Vendor
- Are an Auction Donor

**THANK YOU** for helping us to be one step closer to realizing our Vision of **Solidarity through the celebration of the African Diaspora worldwide.**

Please follow us on social media (@taca757) to stay updated on all that we do.  
We look forward to seeing you:

- On Saturday October 18, 3-5 pm for **Taste the Rhythm: Côte d'Ivoire** [Get your tickets at [taca757.org/events](https://taca757.org/events) and use the code TACAlly025 for a 20% discount]
- On Tuesdays at Virginia Wesleyan University for Youth AND Adult Dance classes - details coming soon!
- In February 2026 for the Afrobeats FEST 757!
- In September 2026 for our next Colors of the Diaspora Gala!

With deepest gratitude,  
Rita Korkor "KK" Addico Cohen  
Founder/Executive Director  
Tidewater African Cultural Alliance

